

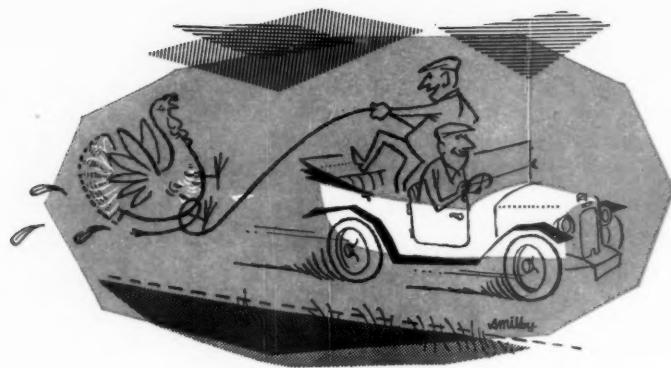
6176

PUNCH, DECEMBER 24 1958

VOL. CCXXX

Punch 9d





Pull the turkey, carve the crackers, kiss the mistletoe,



And get your car a present that will give it extra go.



Fill up with Christmas spirit at your local Esso Sign,

For miles of Happy Motoring in 1959.

*Sing its praises, sound the trumpets,
raise your glasses high,*



*The toast is Esso Extra—
finest you can buy!*



FINEST IN THE WORLD



PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXV No. 6176
DECEMBER 24 1958



Articles

816 THE REV. SIMON PHIPPS
The New Book of Snobs: Religion
819 BERNARD HOLLOWOOD
Adults Not Exactly Mesmerized by TV
822 H. F. ELLIS
Come on, Monica, Do it Again
824 ALEX ATKINSON
Diary of a Communal Lady
826 P. G. WODEHOUSE
The American Scene
831 J. B. BOOTHROYD
This Year, Next Year?
833 PATRICK RYAN
The Child in My Life

Fiction

828 HELENE DARREL
The New Girl
840 MONICA FURLONG
Henry and Lulu — I

Verse

818 E. V. MILNER
Professor Ayer, and Freddie
823 J. B. BOOTHROYD
Party Piece
838 FRANK LITTLER
Christmas Thought

Features

814 PUNCH DIARY
820 QUIZ
837 IN THE CITY
Lombard Lane
837 IN THE COUNTRY
Lanning Roper
838 TOBY COMPETITIONS
839 ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT
Percy Somerset

Criticism

844 BOOKING OFFICE
Anthony Powell: Johnsonian Gleanings
845 BALLET (C. B. Mortlock)
845 THEATRE (Eric Keown)
847 FILMS (Richard Mallett)
848 RADIO (Henry Turton)

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DD

CHARIVARIA

FLEET STREET was jubilant over the rescue of a helicopter crew by a fishing-boat last week. It was the nearest thing to Man Bites Dog for years.

ONLY seasonal feelings of the strongest kind could have made the *News Chronicle* interpret the Registrar-General's latest population estimate in the terms: "202,000 more people in England and Wales to buy presents for this Christmas."

AN example of the deep public feeling for Dr. Nkrumah given in one of the last dozen or so surveys of Ghana was the sprinkling of scent in his path by admirers. Of course it could be taken the other way.

REPORTS on the Queen's Christmas shopping made the point that its only difference from other people's was that no money passed over the counter. Hire-purchase spokesmen want to know what's so different about that?

SPEEDS on the new motorways, says a spokesman of the Automobile Association, will make traditional salutes by



patrolmen impracticable. However, one or two of the older men may be seen to pass with a hand over their eyes.

THE Mayor of Famagusta has suggested that Archbishop Makarios should be allowed to return to Cyprus "as a Christmas gesture." Good King Wenceslas, look out.

WHEN Britain's first drive-in restaurant opens at Slough patrons will simply give a hoot to indicate that they require service. After that it's just a matter of waiting to see if the staff gives one.

MANY viewers were envious of the lady whose house has been designed so that



she can see the television set from every room. They had always wanted to know what Richard Dimbleby looked like from the back.

ACCORDING to a *Times* report of the opening of the restored Gray's Inn Library, the Prime Minister in his speech "confessed" that he loved reading. It is thought that in view of his otherwise good record this won't be held against him.

MR. KHRUSHCHEV's eleventh-hour demand for a Summit conference was no doubt his notion of wringing out the Old Year.

Insult to Injury

You thought that rush-hour travel had already

Attained the very nadir of obscenity? The railways have a vision clear and steady:

Now they're to charge excess for the amenity.



Punch Diary

CHILDREN still put letters addressed to Father Christmas in the fire and watch the up-draught carry the charred fragments on their way. But some of them are too sophisticated for that kind of nonsense and send properly stamped appeals through the post to such likely destinations as the North Pole. The Danish Post Office is gladdened by about a hundred thousand of these missives for onward transmission to Greenland. Iceland receives a mere four thousand and is so warm-hearted (or impudent, if you care to take that view) as to open and answer them. The State Tourist Bureau undertakes this curious task, and manages to slip into its replies a word or two about the attractions of Iceland and the desirability—except perhaps for the children of British trawlers—of visiting it. It is a bit late in the day to worry about the commercialization of Christmas, but the possibilities latent in this traffic make the blood run cold. Some TV advertiser has only to tell children that, to be sure of a reply, letters for Father Christmas should be addressed "c/o our Head Office," and the trick will be done. "P.S.," the replies will state. "Many children wonder how I keep my beard as white as snow even after descending thousands of chimneys. Tell your mother I rinse it regularly in Razzo."

A Comprehensive Anglicanism

THE Bishop of Colchester's statement that three mediæval churches have been converted to uses "not unconnected with religion" might suggest to the less theologically-minded that as the Church cannot get people

into its services it is prepared to stake a claim in any activity that they do pursue. Of course, St. John Ambulance Brigade, a natural history museum and a "cultural community centre" are all well on the opposite side of the line from profane indulgence, and there is no question of drinking dens or even a philistine community centre. But I wonder how the keen agnostic likes being told that his splints or stuffed birds or Stravinsky are "not unconnected with religion." Or, for that matter, the keen Churchman.

Battle-cry

SLOGANS that men will die for are not easy to coin. Sir David Eccles, speaking for O.E.E.C., has kindled such a candle as shall never be extinguished, like the last words of President Adams, "Independence for ever," or the Duc d'Enghien's "For my King and for France." He said: "We stand for multilateral non-discrimination."

Ye Olde Shoppe Steward

WHEREVER you find an advertisement in a foreign paper exhorting the inhabitants to Come to Britain you can be sure that, sooner or later, one of the lures to be offered them will be the beefeaters at the Tower of London. There is something, to a publicist, so indefinitely English about these Yeomen Warders. Certainly not the uniform. Probably, when you

come down to it, no more than the connection with roast beef. Anyway, the Yeomen Warders are entering into the spirit of the thing with a will; they have threatened to strike as a protest against higher rents, and what could be more typically English than that?

Conspicuous Consumption

BUSINESS man I know recently interviewed candidates for junior executive post. Candidate most likely to succeed (on paper) looked a cool competent devil. "About salary . . ." said the B.M., and got no further. "I'm not interested so much in the straight salary"; said the candidate, "what are the exes and what make of car?" Candidate didn't get the job, but the incident ties in with a newspaper report that 70 per cent, no less, of new cars are now paid for by business houses. As the roads become more congested more and more people insist on motoring in the boss's time and vehicle, and the owner-driver is becoming a rarity. Something wrong perhaps with the tax structure of our economy.

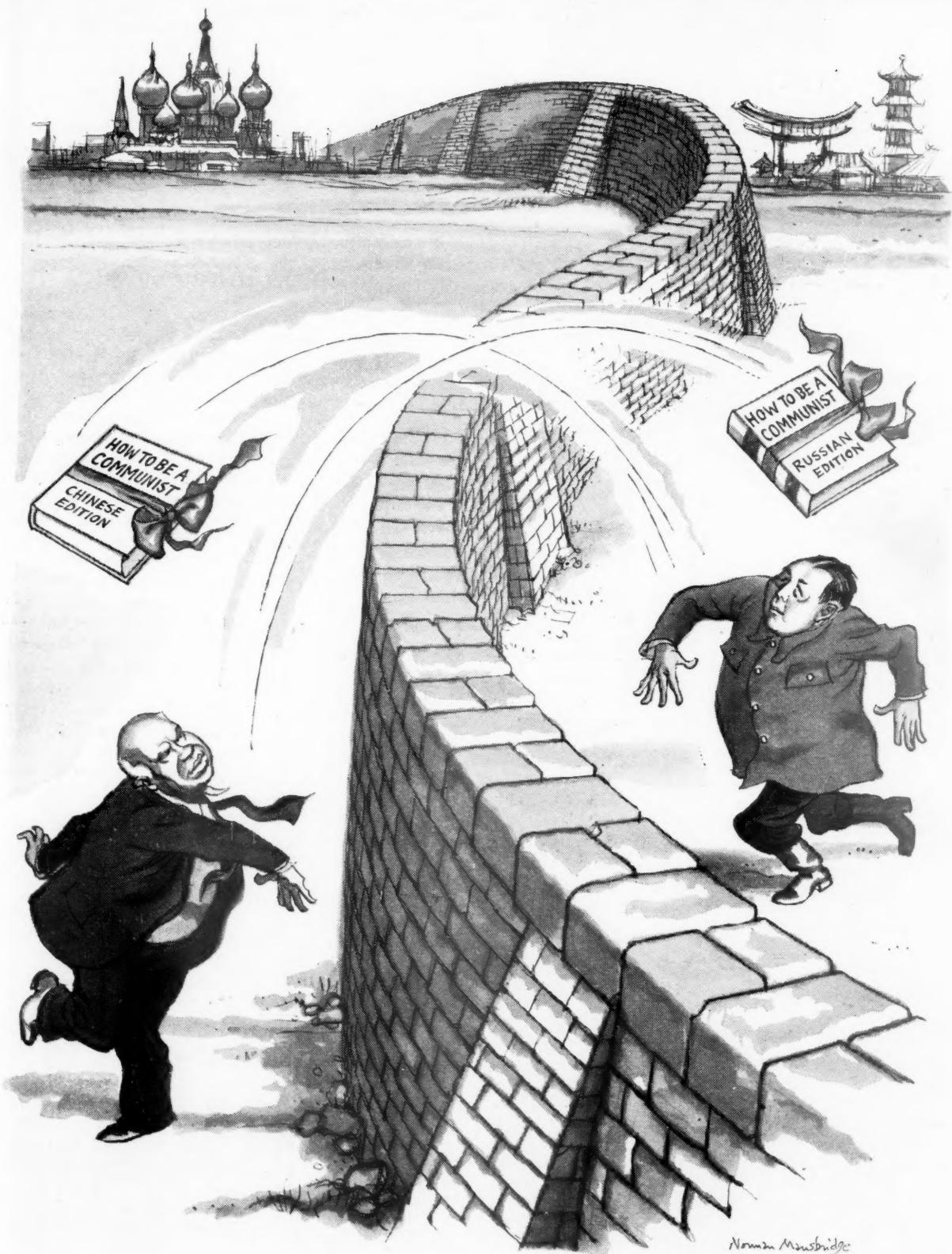
More Ways than One

THOUGH sympathy was generally felt for those civil servants who marched in Whitehall carrying characteristically unimaginative slogans, common sense must ask why they chose this form of demonstration at all. Marching with banners is all very well for the aggrieved with no other means of catching the public attention, but the civil servant has innumerable channels for communicating his point of view to the public. Let us hope for something a little more inspired next time—a pungent broadsheet slipped in with the income-tax demand, a red slip in the driving licence, a little appropriate franking on the nation's correspondence. Possibly Mr. Marples' young ladies in non-dial telephone areas have the richest opportunities: "More pay for civil servants—Number please?"

Social Note

THREE is a growing tendency to solve the Christmas card problem with an entry in a Personal Column—"LADY X wishes all her friends, etc." It would be interesting to know how many people cut the entry out, stick it on a card and put it on the piano; and how many of them are Lady X's friends.

"Every dam' year, you and your last minute oversights."



Norman Manbridge

THE NEW BOOK OF SNOBS



In 1846-7 Thackeray wrote "The Snobs of England" in PUNCH, later reprinted as "The Book of Snobs." In this series snobbery is brought up to date, but the title decorations are from Thackeray's own drawings.

THE REVEREND SIMON PHIPPS on Religion

ANCIENT Palestine was full of snobs. No matter how soundly Amos and Co. ticked them off, spiritual snobbery continued to be the occupational disease of the Old Testament Jews. At the beginning of the New Testament, too, there was an ugly rush for the smartest seats. "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left in thy kingdom." So it went on. "I'm Paul's man," "I'm Apollo's," "I'm Cephas's," snapped the Corinthians. The Inquisition introduced snobbery with violence. Latter-Day Snobs merely complete the succession, with the Presbyterian minister's children saying to those of the Anglican vicar "You're only miserable sinners. We're totally depraved."

But none of this need surprise us. For religion and snobbery are closely related—a connection which gives snobbery the deepest satisfaction until it discovers that what it thought was religion is only "religion" after all, a substitute, a very poor relation pretending, like the snobs, to be the real thing.

There is a reason for being a snob. One doesn't feel sure of oneself. Very few people do and very few people aren't snobs about something. By wearing the right clothes, knowing the right people, especially by their Christian names, saying the right things about wine, horses or Proust, one gains a sense of status. For some insecure people "being religious" is a favourite snobbery. It makes one feel "better" in more senses than one. This sort of "religion" fills many a yawning gap and

expresses itself in many comical and rather endearing ways. There are the "Never-miss-ers," who never miss an opportunity of showing that they "never miss." How God must long for their alarm clocks to go wrong just once. There are the "Bible-Talkers." "We had such joyful fellowship last Easter-tide with the Jacksons and their two goodly babes. We were all richly blessed." Then there are the "Amen-ers"—"Ay-men-ers" or "Ah-MEN-ers" according to churchmanship, the real professionals popping it in just after everyone else just to show. The "Noisier-than-thou" are common too,

gentlemen who show off the bass as though it was the melody, ladies unable to get down from the top notes. There are the "Last-off-their-knees-ers," who carry on a sort of spiritual filibuster after compline addresses, determined to pray longer than anyone else. And there are the "First-on-their-feet-ers," who stand up smartly as soon as the hymn tune is being played over, as all sensible people should, but no really nice people do.

Perhaps all these peculiarities are thrown up by that deepest of all causes of insecurity, the basic sense of not being *good* enough. Conscientious and religious people inevitably have some



"Your sermon was good enough for television, vicar."

experience of guilt. The trouble is, all too often, two sorts of spiritual snobs may be the result—"Pharisees" and "Publicans." The former dissociate themselves from sin by sneering at sinners, the latter go quite the other way. "Oh, but I'm *much* worse than you are. No, really I am. Well, it's awfully nice of you to say so, but if you really knew . . . No, I've been *terrible, ghastly*. I can't tell you." After a bit more of this, they invariably do.

Where, so it seems to me, the New Testament presents a paradox about Heaven and Hell, many Christians find a white and black alternative. Is not this an interpretation of Scripture based more on psychological than on intellectual or spiritual reactions? Those who seem surest of Heaven for themselves are often the surest of Hell for other people. For we hate in others what we know to be in ourselves. By criticizing it in them, we lay our own sense of guilt. Somehow it makes us feel we're on the right side after all. We're all set for Heaven and they can go to Hell.

Another type of snobbery is more down to earth and is evident where our English class-system works itself out in religious terms. It is, on the whole, still smarter to be "church" than "chapel." (There are usually very few Free Churchmen at Eton.) Easily within living memory a certain canon would announce to his congregation: "Confirmation classes for the sons of gentlemen will be held in the rectory on Wednesday evenings. Others will come on Thursdays to the Church hall."

The "parson's voice," too, is largely the product of class-consciousness, in an effort to hide good Northern "a's" and Western "i's" behind the sort of noises bishops make in films. This is bad elocution and worse theology, suggesting as it does that religion is a cut above the ordinary. It is to ignore that Jesus was working-class and that the New Testament is written in second-rate Greek.

History is mainly responsible for all this. Certainly nowadays no one would choose a denomination on social grounds. But other subtle snobberies still crop up. It is surprising how easily one can be labelled an outsider. Write "Dear Brother" to a parson who only answers to "Dear Father," or vice versa, and one has hopelessly shown one's hand. How odd that for both extremes it is



the goats and not the sheep who are looked upon as "woolly."

If all this did not work out as tragic it would be funny. But these pathetic searchings for security and strivings after status make many churchmen look sadly like collections of cranks. It must seem painfully odd to God, and does seem bewildering to what is known as "the outsider."

This word, as often used, is itself a child of snobbery, allied to disparaging talk about those who only turn up at church for Christmas, Easter, Harvest Festival, and Remembrance Sunday. For the non-church-going world at large it is a singularly inaccurate word. From any accurate point of view the church is "the outsider"—still a long way outside the thinking and the activities of the mass of people.

Our oddities only become really funny when snobbery ceases to give rise to "religion," and starts to find peace in Religion. This is where humour and holiness join hands. For what Religion enables one to do is to stand outside oneself and see how funny one really is. Here we are, feeling insecure. So we rush around being "high" or "low," "eight o'clock said" or "nine o'clock sung," saying Amen in the oddest ways and the oddest places, clinging to our rights to run the bazaar cake-stall as

though they were our final under-clothes.

But Religion, at least Christianity, just laughs. Why all this fuss about insecurity? Why not try to understand it first? What you need to make you feel secure is not the secretaryship of the Mothers' Union for yet another year, not a chance to display the alto of Goss in F, not a vicar who'll cross himself a bit less or a bit more. What you need is God. He won't walk in till you invite Him. Till then you are incomplete. That's why you feel insecure. You're only half alive. When you dare to stand outside yourself and see your insecurity like that, how funny, how unimaginably funny to think that all that other stuff could take His place.

Perhaps all this is the reason why we particularly get the giggles in church. The "religious" never do. To suggest that anything in church could be funny is to call in question their whole view of life. Indeed they are themselves often the funniest thing of all, and when they frown at one for giggling it is guaranteed to make one's hysterics complete. But the truth is, our finest expressions of worship are inevitably but attempts to express the inexpressible to the Inexpressible. So when the vicar trips on the way to the lectern, or your next-door neighbour drops all her small



"Remember when you used to have to use a pillow?"

change, this important and often forgotten fact suddenly becomes gloriously apparent. These are perhaps among our most truly religious moments. For we've really seen the difference between God's size and our own, and like the morning stars we are constrained to shout for joy at the way He none the less loves us and treats us as though we were quite as good as He is.

This is indeed what God does. He sees what His Son has made of human nature and is "well pleased." As members of that human nature we have a place in that pleasure. So if one is really looking for status, how about that?

Other writers in this series will be:
**PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE
SIRIOL HUGH-JONES
HENRY LONGHURST
STEPHEN POTTER
J. B. PRIESTLEY
GEORGE SCHWARTZ
FRANCIS WILLIAMS**

"A view which I have not considered is that people are differentiated from one another not by the possession of any special properties but by being different spiritual substances or souls. And the reason why I have not considered it is that I do not find it intelligible . . . How are we to tell, for example, whether the same soul inhabits different bodies, simultaneously or successively? Does it ever happen that two souls get into a single body?"

A. J. Ayer, "The Problem of Knowledge"

I PONDER with minutest care
 The writings of Professor Ayer,
 And, pondering, at last I came
 To see the "soul" as but a name,
 A name which, like "the gods" or
 "Fate,"

Has no Objective Correlate.

And once, while travelling by train,
 I saw Professor Ayer plain.
 (I was familiar with his looks
 From portraits printed in his books.)

818

Along the corridor he went
 And as he passed my neighbour leant
 Across to me and said "I'll swear
 That chap who passed was Freddie
 Ayer;

There's no mistaking him," said he,
 "The brainiest fellow on TV."

To which I answered "Freddie? Nay!
 That was Professor Alfred J.;
 Frederries there may be, by the score,
 But here, within this corridor,
 The name, I feel compelled to state,
 Has no Objective Correlate."

With that I let the matter drop;
 And soon the train came to a stop
 When both his Freddie and my
 Prof.—
 In fact all four of us—got off.

E. V. MILNER

Adults Not Exactly Mesmerized by TV

A Punch Foundation (Research Division) report on the effects of television on grown-ups. Condensed by BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

THE influence of TV on adults' leisure, interests, outlook, health and marital fidelity is far less colourful than is popularly supposed. TV does not change the adult fundamentally. Seven out of ten people recover almost completely when no longer exposed to television. Four out of ten suffer only slightly from channel sickness, and a relatively insignificant proportion of viewers go gaga.

These are among the general conclusions of a *Punch* Foundation team study conducted during 1958 in the Guildford-Maidstone-London triangle.

More particularly the report confirms that telephantiasis or chronic blunting of the sensibilities occurs in less than thirty per cent of viewers, and that videopia (frame-hold drag or peeping nystagmus) affects fewer than one in six.

Most adults, though unselective in their viewing (the report goes on), retain the ability to distinguish between bad and worse, night and day, Day and Dimbleby. The higher the adult's intelligence the slower he is, on the average, to admit to ownership of a set. Viewing is a habit on which the adult falls back when nothing more interesting seems available—that is, for 4·125 hours every night. But people still visit the cinema, pubs and social centres. When they go to the flicks it is usually because they prefer to take pot-luck with their viewing companions (more people go singly to the films than ever before), because they feel sorry for Lord Rank, because they feel frustrated by TV's mealy-mouthed attitude to Horror and Sex, or because they need a good rest after the nervous drain of prolonged channel-switching. (The report points out, however, that the viewer's choice between B.B.C. and I.T.A. is as character-forming and as ruggedly British as the two-party system, the rivalry of the *Observer* and the *Sunday Times*, and the competition between Tate & Lyle and Essington Brothers, sugar manufacturers, of Wokingham.)

Three-quarters of the adults

examined gave a juvenile programme as their favourite. "Oh, Girl!" "The Pervert of Western Creek" and "Animal, Mineral and Harding" were voted the top three. Curiously, only a small fraction of the sample had developed neurotic fears or anxieties from over-indulgence in harsh televised documentation of cruelty, lust, hardship and danger. Indeed the only serious cases of mental instability attributable to TV were adults who admitted that they identified themselves completely with "panelists and such" and suffered agonies when mildly rebuked by a question-master.

The study team discovered that adults who watched television were no more maladjusted than adults who did not, but this fact was not considered important enough to be included in the report. To the suggestion that TV makes adults listless at work and leads to poor concentration, the report replies that it does not. Several manufacturers described experiments calculated to improve output and production per man-hour. One had restyled clocking-on cards to resemble the quartic shape of a TV screen "with impressive but inconclusive results." Another had added interest to machine work by labelling the controls of lathes and shapers "Vert hold," "Sensitivity," "Line Scan," and so forth. Several manufacturers reported increased interest in the night-shift by workers anxious to view afternoon programmes for women and children.

At first TV causes adults to read less, but after a time the consumption of print is more than made good by increased perusal of *Radio Times* and *TV Times*. The introduction of pull-out supplements in the former had enabled two people in any household to read at one and the same time.

The influence of the child's example is of great

importance in the development of adult television habits. Children are urged to be critical and selective in their own viewing and to discourage adults from leaving the set on all night.

So much for the main report. Mention must, however, be made of an important appendix dealing with the influence of TV on the spoken word. This lists the words and phrases introduced to the language by the new medium, and proves, as nothing else can, that the baleful glare of the goggle-box has its compensations. Examples:

"Anything on the telly?"

"Shut your eyes and I'll tell you when Woodrow Wyatt's off the screen."

"We've seen this film before: you proposed to me during it in 1939."

"You women are all alike: if there's boxing or ballet on, supper always has to wait."

"Give it another minute."

"I was only out of the room for a few seconds and I've completely lost the drift. What's happened?"

"There must be something wrong with the set—he's not as broad as all that."

"H-H-Hancock's half-hour."

"Switch over to I.T.A. for the commercials and then come back."

"If Peter Scott can lose pounds, why can't you?"

"Nothing on the telly?"

(The report is published at ten guineas, adults half price)



"I feel awful."

Keep Your Brains from Atrophy

*A quiz to occupy those endless Christmas hours
when the turkey and the mince-pies have gone
and even the boy's model railway is beginning to pall*

1

In the Beginning

- (i) "The white flags are flying at the Coast Guard Station" is the first line of (a) *Rosmersholm*, (b) *The Rose Tattoo*, (c) *Nude With Violin*, (d) *End Game*.
- (ii) Pair these first lines with their plays: (a) "Who's there?" (b) "Boatswain!" (c) "I come no more to make you laugh." (d) "Good day, Sir." (e) "I'll pheeze you, i' faith." (v) *Henry VIII*. (w) *Taming of the Shrew*. (x) *The Tempest*. (y) *Hamlet*. (z) *Timon of Athens*.
- (iii) Pair these first lines with their authors: (a) "We were seated at breakfast one morning, my wife and I, when the maid brought in a telegram." (b) "Somebody tapped on my door." (c) "There were four of us . . ." (d) "Any student of character will concede that outstanding examples of class run contrary to type." (e) "Along this particular stretch of line no express had ever passed." (v) Jerome K. Jerome. (w) Conan Doyle. (x) P. G. Wodehouse. (y) Aldous Huxley. (z) Erle Stanley Gardner.

2

This Keen Encounter of our Witticisms

Pair off the following with the appropriate wits:

- (a) "The thing, the thing!" I shoke out. "Merciful heavens, the thing you open them with!"

(b) The greater part of every family is always odious; if there are one or two good ones in a very large family, it is as much as can be expected.

(c) He inhaled so sharply that a man at the next table who was eating a mousse of chicken stabbed himself in the chin with his fork.

(d) "It reminds me of prison," said Miles when he was first admitted there.

(e) It was the highest praise he knew. Hell is full of musical amateurs. Music is the brandy of the damned. This morning I took out a comma, and this afternoon I put it back again.



(g) I have been told that Wagner's music is better than it sounds.

(h) What would life be without arithmetic, but a scene of horrors?

(i) The only athletic sport I ever mastered was backgammon.

(j) The man who bites his bread, or eats peas with a knife, I look upon as a lost creature.

Oscar Wilde, W. S. Gilbert, Bernard Shaw, Sydney Smith, Evelyn Waugh, P. G. Wodehouse, Samuel Butler, Stephen Leacock, Mark Twain, Douglas Jerrold.

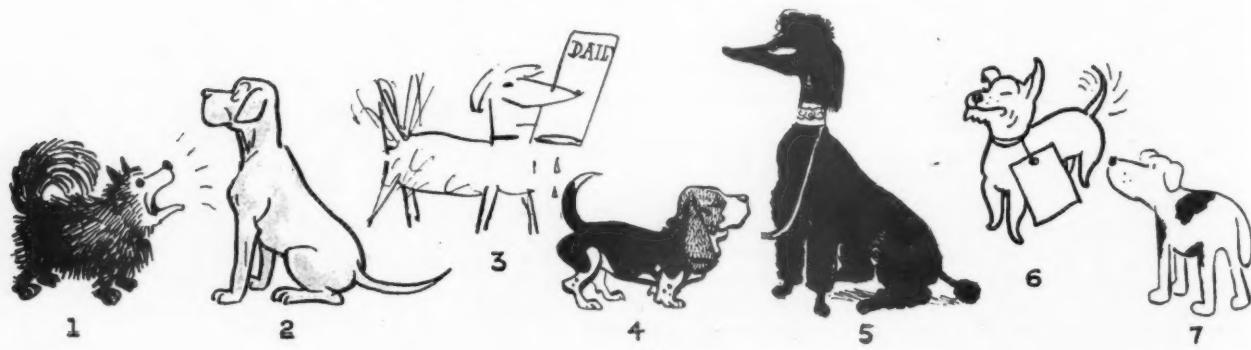
3

Uncoupled Kipling

These lines are out of context. Can you name the poems from which they are taken?

- (a) *Imprimis*—ten days "liver"—due to his drinking beer;
- (b) And I have been servant of Love for barely a twelvemonth clear.
- (c) The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row
- (d) And what do they know of England who only England know?
- (e) Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
- (f) The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play.
- (g) So when the cruel march is done an' when the roads is blind
- (h) We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.
- (i) Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud,
- (j) We have had no end of a lesson; it will do us no end of good.
- (k) 'E isn't one o' the reg'lar line, nor 'e isn't one o' the crew,
- (l) There are girls he married secret, asking no permission to.
- (m) 'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
- (n) Don't you tell where no-one is, nor yet where no-one's been.
- (o) There are only four things certain since Social Progress began:
- (p) Ye may kill for yourselves, and your mates, and your cubs as they need, and ye can.
- (q) And you'd have no muffins or toast for your tea
- (r) If I were drowned in the deepest sea.

4 The creators of the dogs depicted below all have other drawings in this week's PUNCH. Do you know who they are? (The artists, not the dogs.)



5

On the right are twelve cricketers from the Commonwealth, whose likenesses have appeared in Punch during the last few years: (a) Who are they? and (b) which of them was playing at Brisbane in the last Test?



6

For Gourmets

Would you *really* know what to expect if you ordered a dish:

- (a) au Gratin
- (b) Meunière
- (c) Béchamel
- (d) Hollandaise
- (e) Walewska
- (f) Mornay
- (g) Chasseur
- (h) Maître d'Hôtel
- (i) Béarnaise?

7

Blue Remembered Hills

Fill in the missing mountains:

- (a), They had stolen my soul away
- (b) The water has drowned the.....
- (c) Deep in the bosom of.....
- (d) Red glare on.....

8

Whodunit?

Name these ten detective story writers, if you can pierce their disguise:

- (a) Early *Punch* artist
- (b) Auctioneer of art
- (c) Premiers' confidant
- (d) We've seen the Last of her
- (e) Not only murder victims bled with him
- (f) Bread-and-butter letter-writer
- (g) One of Burke's eventually landed gentry
- (h) Prizefighter of Pimlico
- (i) One of Our Glum Friends League
- (j) Day and Night Songster

Answers on p. 836

Winter

WHEN bicycles are apt to fall,
And cheeks are peppered by the hail,
And plumbers clog the draughty hall,
And folk come frozen home by rail,
When double nips scarce thaw the jowl,
Then writhing head be wreathed in towel,
Ti-shoo!

It's flu! Ti-shoo! To fill your cup,
Comes breezy Jones to cheer you up. F. L. M.

Come On, Monica, Do it Again

ONE of the nicest men I ever knew used to stand an empty wine bottle upside down on a sheet of newspaper and challenge people he had only just met to take the paper away without touching or upsetting the bottle. At all ordinary times he was a decent, modest, sensible sort of chap, but the spectacle of half a dozen flushed faces topped by paper hats had him clearing a space on the table in an instant. "You just keep banging the table with one hand," he would say, "and each time you bang you give the paper a gentle pull with the other. That was a bit too hard, but you see the idea?"

Everybody saw the idea, but that did not prevent this suddenly debased werewolf from standing the bottle up on its neck again and restarting from the middle of the sheet. When he had finally brought it off he used to look round at his audience in a way that made one feel that his normal likeable three-hundred-and-sixty-four-days-in-a-year self was just a sickening pose. The revelation was so shocking that more than once I have been tempted to take the bottle and crack my old friend's

head open with it. I never actually did it, though, because some girl always got the bottle first and placing her two hands round its shoulders, if I make myself clear, bent down until the bottle was resting on the floor. In this inelegant posture, arched over like a hoop and with her hair flopping over her eyes like a sheepdog's, she would call for an empty matchbox to be set between her teeth. "What you have to do," this earnest broad-beamed object would tell us, "is to see how far you can stretch yourself out by kind of humping the bottle forward and the winner is the person who drops the matchbox furthest away from their feet. You try it, Pam, only you ought to have your heels against the wall actually."

The devil of it is that one thing leads to another. Nobody has an empty matchbox to give the girl until he has tipped the contents out on the table, and I need hardly stress the consequences of that. The longest interval ever recorded between the emptying out of a boxful of matches and the arrangement of twelve of them by some exhibitionist into four equal squares is one and a half minutes. After that all you have to do is to remove three matches and replace them in such a way as to make three equal squares. The hardest thing about this problem is to decide whether it is worse not to know how to do it and have to fiddle about endlessly in an interested way, or to know how to do it and have to pretend to fiddle about in order not to be a spoilsport.

There is generally a fresh-faced man with a moustache who knows how to bridge a wineglass with three matches on the cantilever principle, and the introduction of wineglasses gives Monica her chance to fill one to the brim with water and pick it up off the floor without spilling a drop while sitting on a chair with her hands tied behind her back. Good old Monica! But for her spirited example young James might never have shown us his standing spring over the sofa; and it was that splendid leap, with all the good-natured emulation to which it led, that really got the party going. Not everybody, naturally, can do a single-handed short-arm balance like Edgar, but Pam is as good as ever at swallowing lighted cigarettes, and Christopher seems to think nothing of sticking pins in his thigh. "The secret is to keep the muscles absolutely taut," he explains. Or is it absolutely loose? No matter, sit down everyone and watch. Mr. Barnett is about to remove his waistcoat without taking off his jacket.

Meanwhile, reader, what of you and me? Is it conceivable that we should be content to be the beneficiaries of so much fun and skill and ingenuity and ourselves contribute nothing original to the common pool? Are we to hang our heads like boobies when appealed to, mumbling that unfortunately one has never been much—there was a clever trick with string only it is a long time—so if they *don't* mind . . . ?



I cannot speak for the reader, but for myself I have relied for ten years and more now on the Möbius Strip. This is an act that can be performed in the most strait-laced company. I take a long strip of paper two inches wide and paste the ends together. I now have a circle or hoop of paper, and if anybody is watching I ask him what he thinks will be the result if I stick a pair of scissors into the middle of the paper and cut right round parallel to the edges. He says the result will be two paper hoops, each one inch wide. I cut as stated, and the result is two hoops, each one inch wide.

I am properly abashed. The watcher's merriment at my discomfiture is enough, with luck, to draw one or two more of the party into my net. I square my shoulders and, taking another strip of paper, give one end a furtive half-twist (i.e. through 180 degrees) before pasting it up. It is now a Möbius strip, and when I cut it right round down the middle as before it falls not into two narrow strips but into one narrow strip, twice as long as the original hoop. There are cries of astonishment. Men, women and bright-eyed girls come running from every corner of the room to see what is afoot. I repeat the operation for their benefit, only this time I surreptitiously give one end of the paper a full 360 degree twist before pasting. I cut again, and behold! the paper falls into two one-inch-wide strips, as in my first experiment, *but they are interlocked*. Sensation. The whole room is hanging on my scissors when, by way of variety, I make another 180-degree-twist Möbius and cut it along a line one-third of the width of the strip from the edge. The result passes their comprehension, as indeed it passes mine. Finally, without any attempt at concealment I twist one end through no less than 540 degrees—a full twist and a half. "What on earth will it do now?" whispers the fresh-faced moustached man, who only five minutes ago was winning all hearts by standing on his head. "Find out for yourself," I say casually, handing over paper and scissors, and stroll away, exhausted by hero-worship.

To Mr. Eugene P. Northrop, of Chicago, to whose *Riddles in Mathematics* I owe my annual Christmas popularity, I send my seasonable and most grateful compliments.



"Pinch me."

Party Piece

I MUST sit down at the keys again, and play for the kids to dance,
And all I know is the old tunes, and this is my golden chance;
So it's "Moonglow" and it's "Solitude" (with the spread chords shaking),
It's "Sandman" and "Chicago" and a left wrist aching.

I must sit down at the keys again, and scatter the lovely old corn,
With "Can't Help Lovin'" and "Dixie" and "That's Why Darkies
Were Born";
And has-beens that are come-backs (Just fancy the old boy knowing!)—
Descending tenths in the left hand, and a bald patch showing.

I must sit down at the keys again, remembering once, long ago,
How a middle-aged man played ragtime in a style we didn't know;
He tiddly-dee'd and he oom-pah'd, no Shearing could be blither,
He wouldn't let anyone else play . . . and I won't, either.

J. B. BOOTHROYD



Diary of a Communal Lady

Translated by
ALEX ATKINSON

These recently acquired fragments of a private journal throw a vivid light on day-to-day events in a new "People's Commune" of Red China.

WEDNESDAY.—A joyful day. Our village communal kitchen was at last declared open by an emissary of the Great Wise Father Mao Tse-tung, who had travelled far to visit us. Eleven thousand villagers cheered by numbers as the first ton of communal rice was poured into the boiler, the other thirty thousand being on the day shift planting potatoes. (Soon the whole of Ho Shun province will be under potatoes, with a border of bean-shoots a mile wide. True, it was hard work flattening the two sacred mountains in the north-east corner, but we worked with a will for a whole afternoon, and now the province is as smooth as a chess-board. Next year we will have enough potatoes to last the village nearly a month.) Two wives inadvertently fell into the boiler with the rice, in a trance of joy.

Thursday.—The communal kitchen

began serving the evening meal at breakfast time, and the queue of villagers stretched twelve deep away to the horizon. It was a heartening sight. This great boon will release us women from useless household chores, and to-day I started work on the blast furnaces. What bliss! Thirty-seven hundred of us manufactured three blast furnaces each before sunset, in the big field, and to-morrow they will be in full production. Little had I realized, in the days of my indolent youth, when I made a pretence of being happy painting fans and playing the flute in the summer house of my father, how quickly and economically pig-iron can be manufactured, if you set your mind to it. I am in charge of those who work the bellows—nine hundred and eight grandmothers. As we work we sing the poems of our great Leader-poet, Mao Tse-tung, from the song-sheets provided. At the end of the day the song-sheets are collected by the prefect, Lo Hin, and counted.

Friday.—Memo. I must remember to denounce my mother as a dangerous reactionary. Thrice last week she spat during announcements on the village loud-speakers—once in the middle of a hymn to Mao Tse-tung composed by three quarters of a million seven-year-old children in Chi-Si province, and twice while the assistant Under-Leader of Callisthenics was reading the list of absentees from communal netball, who have since been very properly minced for fertilizer. Also she has refused to erase the pince-nez she scrawled on the tinted photograph of our revered Mao Tse-tung which hangs in the state-certified sleep-room of our allotted dwelling-box. And last Tuesday she refused point-blank to wear her regulation blue denim boiler-suit and peaked cap for her work in the village pig-sties. As the eight thousand pig-sty shock-troops marched off at dawn, their lanterns flickering in the dusk and their voices raised in the joyous chant "Mao Tse-tung the Fattener of Pigs will Lead Us Into Australasia e'er the Blossom has Waned on the Collectivized Soya Bean Bushes," mother brought up the rear in a pair of old striped pyjamas, shouting rude quotations from Confucius at the authorized passers-by. I also happen to know that she is secretly engaged on a work of fiction. From what I have read of it so far it appears

to be nothing more than a loathsome anthology of deviationist propaganda. The New China has no room for old women of ninety-three who yearn for such counter-revolutionary luxuries as Privacy, Unorganized Leisure, Personal Ownership of Objects, Freedom to Weep in the Streets, or Family Life. I have given her seven hundred Marxist pamphlets and kept her without food for a month, but still she persists in tuning in to *The Ed Sullivan Show* and *What's My Line?* Nothing can remain but liquidation.

M o n d a y.—A g a l a occasion! At eleven o'clock this morning every villager was permitted to explode one fire-cracker at a signal on the village whistle. This was a mark of joy at the fact that the Blessed Liberator himself, the All-wise Mao Tse-tung, was paying our tiny village a surprise visit! All through the week-end the inhabitants had been kept busy stitching three million flags and banners in readiness for the great day. At noon our Leader appeared on the rostrum which had been constructed in twenty-five minutes by two thousand six hundred members of our local branch of the Affiliated Red China Infant Storm Troop Volunteers. The infants themselves were given leave of absence from the Greetings To Mao Tse-tung Ceremony so that the State-Permitted Clinic of the Heavenly Balm could attend to the whip-marks on their backs—the glorious evidence of their devoted labours. The Great One read to the assembled multitude (three quarters of a million souls from this village alone, and coach-loads of nosey-parkers from Hi Pin province on an Organized Trip) the latest pig-iron and steel production figures, the number of usable babies born last month (a record), eight of his recent poems, and a speech in which he explained how in ten years' time the entire surface of the earth would be covered with citizens of the New China



"I told you we should never have left the elephants."

up to a depth of three feet. "And then," he said in conclusion, "we shall see what we shall see!"

Our dwelling-box seems quieter to-day. Mother's clothes fetched two yen on the black market. I hope no gossiping neighbour watched the transaction, for it seems you can trust no one in this hole.

"Too many books on how to write, impose rules which have never existed in good English (e.g., 'Don't begin a sentence with "And" or "But"')—a rule ignored by all the best people from the translators of the Bible to Bernard Shaw and the staff of the *Sunday Express*).

"The DESKBOOK OF CORRECT ENGLISH, by Michael West and P. F. Kimber (*Longmans*, 10s. 6d.) is different. To show its range I take this brief quiz from its pages:

1. Right or Wrong?

(a) 'Who did you give it to?...'

Right. The belief that it is wrong to end a sentence with a preposition is a fallacy." *Sunday Express*

Any other rules ignored by the staff of the *Sunday Express*?



Ericburgin

P. G. WODEHOUSE glances at the American Scene

I DON'T want to damp the enthusiasm of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company and spoil their day by being a wet blanket, but I must say this latest venture of theirs leaves me shaking my head a bit. I can see that they mean well, but they seem to me not to have thought the thing out. Briefly what has happened is that, sensing a long-felt want, they have put on the market a portable martini cocktail. It comes in a vinyl plastic envelope, whatever that is, and milady carries it about in her handbag. When she feels in need of a refresher she slits open the envelope with the nail-scissors and quaffs. (In an emergency it can also be bitten open.)

So far, so good. There are moments during a shopping tour on a summer afternoon when a quick martini makes all the difference. But, my dear old manufacturers, how are you supposed to keep the mixture chilled? There, as must have occurred to other thinking men besides myself, is where the snag comes in. It does not take long on a July afternoon for a cocktail enclosed in an envelope, which in its turn is enclosed in a handbag, to reach boiling point, and if there is anything more unpleasant than a hot martini, the news of it has not yet reached us.

These Minnesota birds are the fellows who invented Scotch tape, widely recognized as one of the greatest

boons ever bestowed on humanity, and in my opinion they ought to concentrate on things like that and leave portable cocktails alone. Cobbler, stick to thy last, is the way I look at it.

A man who could use a few portable cocktails, even warm ones, is Lester O. Green of Redwood City, California, for he is feeling very low at the moment as the result of a judicial decision by Municipal Judge Edward Ryan. It is not too much to say that Municipal Judge Edward Ryan has taken all the sunshine out of his life.

Like all residents of California, very few of whom have any legs, Lester was accustomed to go everywhere in his car,

until came a day when it was generally noticed that when at the wheel he was always intoxicated. They took his licence away from him, and he got a motor-cycle and made shift with that. But that old habit of celebrating persisted—to such an extent that he was forbidden to ride a motor-cycle. He then got a push bike and might be enjoying it still had not Police Constable John Hacker reported having seen him "drunkenly pedalling." This brought him squarely up against Municipal Judge Edward Ryan.

"You'd better learn to walk," the judge said, ordering his push bike to be impounded. So now if you go to Redwood City and see a moody man weaving from side to side along the pavement, that will be Lester.

You and I, contemplating Lester O. Green, feel a gentle pity and drop a silent tear, but to someone like J. Philip Cahil, of Lynbrook, N.J., he must seem a weakling who gave in too easily and did not let the authorities have a decent run for their money. The idea of giving up your car just because your licence had been taken away would strike Philip Cahil as bizarre.

They did not actually take Philip's licence away, because he kept changing his number plates and they were unable to catch him. All they were able to do was to keep giving him tickets, and over the years he accumulated a hundred and thirty-one of these for such offences as overtime parking, double parking, parking next to fire hydrants, parking on the pavement, passing a signal light and failing to signal. Little wonder that Magistrate Murtagh, when they finally picked him up, said "Your conduct calls for an explanation."

The upshot and outcome was that Mr. Cahil had to pay \$6,550 in fines, but, as he often says, money is not everything. He has the consolation of having set up a record at which all other motorists will shoot in vain. He attributes his success to clean living and avoidance of all foods tending to acidosis. He eats lots of spinach.

Talking of motorists, what is the best thing to wear when out for a drive? In the old days it was simple. You put on goggles and a fur coat, giving the illusion that a shortsighted bear had escaped from the Zoo, but now there

is no uniform uniform. One wears this, another that. Leo Griffith Jr., of Washington, for instance, turned out the other day encased in fourteen shirts, two pairs of drawers, two vests, three pairs of socks, a jacket and an overcoat. It was never discovered what whim had led him to don a costume needing only the kitchen stove to make it complete, but it served him in good stead when, fleeing from the police in a stolen car, he crashed at a hundred miles an hour, for where a nastier dresser might have handed in his dinner pail he suffered only head and leg cuts.

Advertisements very rarely fail to pull in business sooner or later, but occasionally you have to give them time. The Draper Corporation of Worcester, Massachusetts, found this out as the result of a correspondence with a female customer who wanted to buy a bread mixer. Considerations of space make it impossible to record the correspondence in detail, but this was more or less how it ran:

"Sirs. I want to buy a bread mixer."

"Madam. This is a firm manufacturing textile machinery. We don't make bread mixers."

"Sirs. You're crazy. Of course you make bread mixers."

"Madam. We have not made bread mixers for years and years and years."

"Sirs. What's the matter with you? You seem all mixed up."

"Madam. You may be right in considering us mixed up, but we are not mixed up with bread mixers."

"Sirs. I want a bread mixer."

"Madam. Yes, we have no bread mixers."

"Sirs. Then why do you advertise them?"

"Madam. We don't."

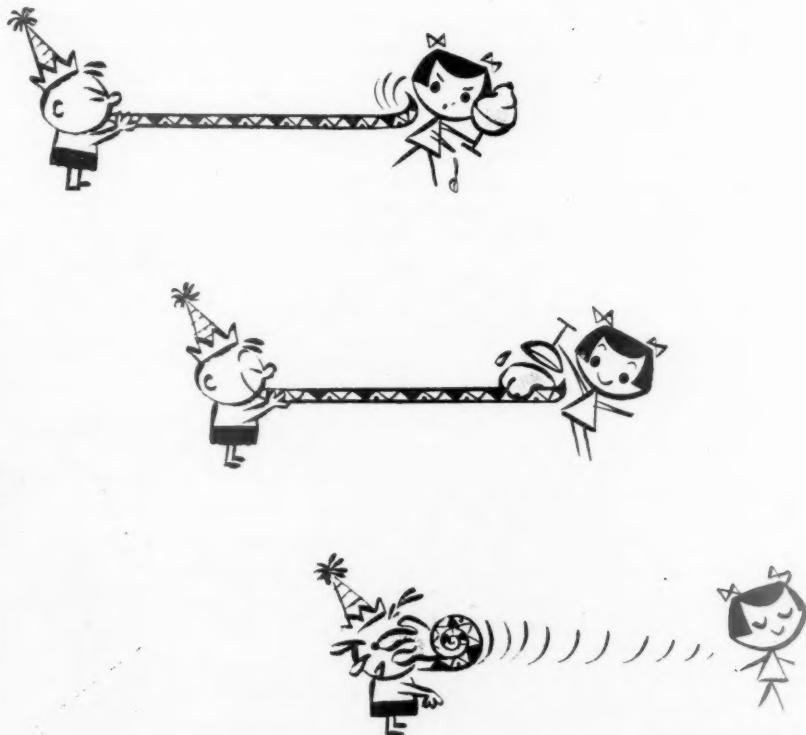
"Sirs. You do, too. I enclose your advertisement."

It turned out to be one that had appeared in the local press in the early spring of 1882.

"Those horror-film posters featuring a 50 ft. monster wading across, say, San Francisco with an exquisite blonde starlet screaming in his scaly arms are dying out . . . There is a substitute—a monstrous blonde starlet striding across San Francisco carrying in her pretty hand—no, not a monster. A car . . . The film is called: 'The Attack of the 50 ft. Woman' . . ."

Daily Express

Goodbye, 38 ft.-23 ft.-36 ft. woman.





The New Girl

By HELENE DARRELL

Readers may recall eighteen-year-old HELENE DARRELL'S earlier sketch of café life, "The Time of Being." This second article is printed as it was received

YOU know people often wonder why I am called Mavis and I dont blame them really because its not exactly common. But the reason is very complicated and rather sad. It was after my auntie you see who emigrated to Australia with an Irish man in 1930 and was never seen again. And mum thought what a good idea it would be to have a memorial to her, her name being Mavis. So that was me, and dad always says that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. However that is not the only memorial because Irish men being what they are mum does not hold out much hope and every year at Christmas mum puts a little heartrending verse under the personal. Often she gets quite peculiar about that time, since having seen that movie about Van Goff she figures her genius must not be thwarted. When she really gets her teeth into it she sometimes forget things, like taking the iron off dads best shirt and stamping out cinders on the carpet. And it gets a bit annoying to come home after a hard day and find the house one great mass of crumbling, blazing ruins with mum crouching in the middle oblivious and hairless, her dried up biro poised like some pale plumed dove of peace above the spent remains of her scribbling pad. Still she has not sent her ear to anyone yet so it is alright. I expect that is because of having those narrow letter boxes now though with springs. And an ear would be an

awkward sort of parcel wouldnt it? I dont think the postman would like it either, they are rather strict nowadays and it might attract dogs. Mum has a ring through hers too so it would probably have to go on the railway anyway unless they registered it.

But I do think mum has something. I bet they hunt all over for things she wrote in hundreds of years time. Maybe someone will even publish a book posthumously and call it GOODBYE MRS TIPS, auntie being a waitress. And it will sell a million copies and be on tele and in top twenty and everything, and they will pull down the bards with gleeful shouts and erect mum, and she might even be on the pier at Blackpool labelled something like REVELATION. But wait, I feel a psalm comming on, as they say. I have just remembered the verse mum wrote last year so see what you think of it.

*Gone! Gone with the infamous Kelly,
Crost the great big garsly sea.
Ah bitter, we have searched for you.
Oh where, oh where can she be.*

The year before you could almost hear the heartfelt want:

*After the final parting,
She went we know not where,
Yet on the picture rail hanging still
Is the girl with the flyaway hair.*

Now you know what I mean. I think she has a touch of Wordsworth. Its not

everyone who can write poetry and Im sure such a book would sell like hot bricks. Actually I think auntie had a bit of the gipsy in her because mum said when she was small she used to spend hours when she should have been washing up gazing through a chink in the curtain where the stitches had run down the lace, (well that was what they told people but really grandma did it on purpose with the breadknife one Sunday night so she could see any cats that came in the garden and run after them wailing and tearing her hair, and chucking bricks and things at them, also it was to see if the woman next door threw over any garbage because she did sometimes when the dustbin was full, and once a great big bed, which made grandma livid, for those kind of things get in the way dont they when youre trying to grow things? But still one good thing, she went a bit funny after throwing it, not having practised with anything larger than a saucepan, and had to stay in bed ages. Grandma said she was just putting it on, for it was just an old tin thing with no knobs or posts or anything. But I expect it was a strain getting it over a six foot wall without taking it to pieces.) like one in a trance watching the narrow columns of the gasworks rising in the distance while her absentminded hands worked up a lather in the sink.

But I did not really intend to write about auntie, I just got carried away by



the nostalgia. I really was going to write about when I was a career girl. I was madly keen, ever since I saw a film when some old guy died and left a fortune to his secretary tied up in nylon shoelaces. So I thought I would be a secretary too, my ambitions being a palatial mansion, a swimming pool filled with coke and a tele by my bed which switched on directly the programmes started. I thought I would get in with something more plastic like free toys in cereal packets which is the up and coming thing. So I wrote to dozens of millionaires, and one wrote back and said it might be best if I learned how to type and spell and things like that first. So I thought for a long while what a cheek he had and decided he could find someone else. And I also thought how mean the post office was not to have delivered the rest of my letters, but perhaps it had something to do with their not having stamps on. However in the end I did decide to go and learn to type somewhere, at the

local technical college. Of course there were boys went there too, but naturally it made no difference to me. I was deadly serious in my ambitious intent.

I went with my friend Gloria and we had walked halfway down the corridor chatting aimably before we realised. Holey moley! The walls on either side of us were lined with boys in nonchalant postures. I took little notice of them myself though it was with no small feeling of disgust that I noticed Glorias hips were swinging more than was there usual wont. A revolutionary thought struck me and I had to laugh. I just wondered what would happen if her impetus carried her right round, but it did not unfortunately so I never knew.

Well I think I will describe my dress. First of all I had a new lime green and black sweater which I had discovered in Freds at the weekend, then I had a wokmanlike skirt in straw coloured velvet, straight with only a sudden

unexpected flaring of knife pleats below the knee. On my head I had one of those band things in beaten gold which you fix beneath your front hair and allow a few curls to stray across with discrete cunning. I believe some people call them headache bands but actually mine was the tinfoil from round the cap of a Bovril jar that I had hammered out with the china dog on the shelf when mum was not looking. This band was just right and it even had a hole in each end to put an elastic band through. On my legs were sheer nylons with only the velvet butterfly embossed on the side to show they were not bare. Sometimes I draw a line down the back of my leg with an eyebrow pencil because it is quicker than stockings. I had beige swede shoes on.

I quickly discovered it was a vain hope to expect the boys to ignore me. As I went past several whistled and one stopped picking his teeth to ask me to join the rugger team. I declined coley





"Absent friends."

because I have something better to do than run around on Saturday morning with a little leather helmet on. For instance I generally go to the childrens matinee which is OK for sixpence but mostly old films with wheels going backwards and wet looking dames in lame dresses with pointed feet. Its a bit uncomfortable though crouching with your knees on the floor so you do not stick up above the rest and sometimes I wonder if it is worth it. I should not advise elderly people with muscle strain and things to try it.

As you might imagine with all this attention I began to feel quite sultry, and walking alone with narrowed eyes I did not see the tall handsome boy with the bitten down finger nails and the right handed razor sticking out of

his pocket until I had walked into him. Apologetically I untangled my fringe from his coat button meantime sizing him up with a practiced glance. Could I have imagined it or did the smoldering eye in his lean brown face flicker involuntary? But wait. He raised a manely hand and flicked back a troublesome lock of hair with his combe. He told me after it was troublesome that morning because he had laid on it the night before, you know how you do sometimes when you forget to pin curl it. Anyway he had nice hair, at the front a mass of carefree curls and at the back a folded over bit. The sides of his face were framed by two narrow stripes similar to those in that film about the Mississippi gambler.

He wore a long knee length coat in a

purple brocade of floral desing, with detachable sham leather collar. You know I really think those long coats have something dont you? I mean I am no Socrates but I bet in a hundred years time everyone will be wearing them, even with bowler hats.

It was funny how my hair got more tangled in his button hole. I struggled feebly against some power stronger than my own as his warm breath clouded the transparant string of poppets around my neck. Then suddenly without warning I gasped with terror for his hand had delved deep into his pocket and emerged clutching his open razor. Alas what power had I against such a weapon? My stifled gasps were to no avail for out of dilated eyes I saw the shinning blade edging ever closer. This is it I

remember thinking. I owe much, I have nothing, I give the rest to the poor. And don't throw away my records of Tommy mum. Then I was touched by the blade and instantly I became like one processed. Kicking and writhing I grasped the blunt edge of the medallion hanging from my neck. Only now would I know its true worth. With a groan I plunged it between his ribs and twisted it.

He let out eversuch a giggle and tried to push me off. Then he dragged me right down the corridor. But at last the air came rushing fresh and cool to my head and I was free. I stepped over a few people playing poka on the floor and another fellow doing scientific looking diagrams on the wall with a bit of chalk. Then at last I reached the secretarial

room to find it full of girls doing important things like filing their nails.

I was only there a week though because I changed my mind and I saw a nice boy on the bus who worked in a cinema, and I thought an usherette must be a nice job so I left. They didn't miss me because I had only been twice. You know some mornings you can't be bothered can you? And I was a bit scared of the principal too. Well it was like this. Funny thing but I came in one morning and saw him standing outside the door marked PUSH and pulling like mad and getting really red and upset. So I didn't say anything but went round to the other door. I mean I'm not one to interfere and he was a terribly clever man with lots of letters after his name. I did think he might perhaps be testing

how much it could stand. Anyway when I came out at ten for my coke and cream doughnut he was still there and I thought maybe he had his coat caught in it or something so I went and pulled it. But just as I pulled he suddenly saw the notice and changed his tactics. Gosh this body hurtling past gave me quite a turn as you can imagine and it took two or three large milk shakes to calm me down after. And when the body sat up weakly and said hello it startled me, for he had never spoken to me before. So I backed away very quick like in alarm and left him sitting there with his knees drawn up under his chin and an indescribably look such as I have never seen before, no not even on a Friday night at the Angel Rock'n Roll Club, on his face.

This Year, Next Year?

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

TO-DAY is December 24, and once again your plans not to have Christmas have been defeated. It was in 1948, when the stout, four-colour salute from Ramage's Rayne-prufe Roofing-Felt crashed through your letter-box in mid-October, that you first resolved to cease all truck with the Festival. Unluckily the very next post brought greetings and gifts from the Commonwealth aunts and colonial cousins—who notoriously begin their Christmas preparations in April—and within a week the house was ringing with talk of trees and tinsel, cakes, cards and candles. It was too late. Successive years saw the ruthless formula repeated. This year, unless I am much mistaken, you have your biggest tree yet; every cupboard spills crackers; cards have showered upon you like monstrous snow, and even allowing for those knocked into the fire or lost inside the piano it is more impossible than ever to find your pipe, see the clock or remember who "George and Enid with Every Good Wish" can possibly be.

Obviously this tyranny must be overthrown at last. And the time to start is now. You have a few days' leisure immediately ahead. Begin planning under the following suggested heads:

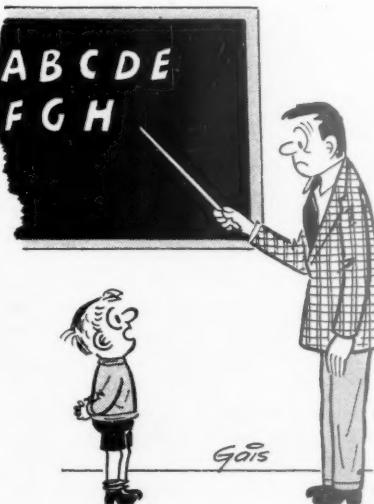
Waste Disposal. For this you will need the co-operation of the whole family. Their briefing is to hunt down,

rout out and destroy, wherever they may be found, all holly-printed sticker-tape, fragile glass balls, twisted-nail puzzles, old paper hats, empty miniature liqueur bottles, piano copies of "Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer," Father Christmas disguises, charade costumes, and all other relics and reminders of the Festival of Goodwill. Drawing-pins left in the picture-rail from last year should be removed; also the bucket of earth in the vegetable garden which contained last year's tree. Assemble, for the first available jumble-sale of 1959, all fairylights, tiny broken xylophones, abhorrent gift neckwear and presents from the past whose function you have been hoping all this time to discern. In a house cleared of the Christmas fetish free thoughts can begin to breathe. For the time being, however, retain the Christmas-card list. You will need this for your—

Warning Letters. It will be found less burdensome to spread these over a month or two. Ten a week, and the job will be finished by spring. It is only common politeness, after all, to tell your friends that you are sending no cards to anyone, ever again, and that theirs, if received, will be thrown into the dustbin unopened. Make allowance for a certain amount of ensuing correspondence from family circles, saying that they have enjoyed the joke and will of course be sending their usual book-token

parcel of Cornish wild-flowers or home-crocheted table-mats nearer the Day. Ignore these letters. You have taken your stand. Stick to it. To weaken under these early emotional pressures means the collapse of the whole plan. Even sterner tests lie ahead, as, for instance, with—

Tradesmen's Roundsmen, etc. Resolve, if necessary on oath, not to cross the palm of any coal-, dust-, milk-, or postman, baker's-, butcher's-, grocer's-, greengrocer's-, fishmonger's- or paper-boy. This will take character. The



"After H? P, sir."



temptation to buy a year's near-civility from the man who brings the paraffin will be great. Resist it. You may feel inclined to take these people on one side in, say, August, and explain your plan. This is permissible. The stronger-minded will merely allow the new arrangements to make their own unheralded impact at the back door. In any case, expect for the next year or two to find your letters delivered next door, your papers dropped in the wet shrubbery, your Sunday joint left unannounced on the coal-bunker. This price must be paid. Remember the ultimate emancipation. Grin and bear it.

Parties. By the time the Christmas Party Season is upon you your resolution should have hardened sufficiently for you to face it squarely and ignore it. Your friends will have learned of your No Noël campaign. Many will have pretended admiration and sworn to follow suit themselves. The spectacle of their weakening, one by one, their

shamefaced admission that they intend to have just a little holly after all, their stealthy purchases of gummed Santa Claus labels and tinsel string—in these frailties will your own sturdy resolve be reflected and heightened; and this is the beginning of your reward. The friend who stands four-square with you through all the fleshly temptations of the festive time will be a friend indeed, even if you have never cared for him very much. To his party you can go, and he to yours. Past the tree-lit, cracker-strewn windows of the feeble-willed you will come to each other's house for a non-Christmas drink in a Yuleless sitting-room, wearing old un-gift socks, smoking tobacco you have bought with your own money—a social occasion free from every Christmas association, save perhaps to pause in the porch and sternly de-Wenceslas a lurking wait.

Outside Influences (a) Commerce: If Christmas is to be kept at bay with any

success you must boycott all commercial enterprises conducting campaigns of indoctrination by means of cottonwool snow, winter-scene window-dressing and illuminated notices urging you to join their Christmas Club. This may mean that your whole shopping practice will need reorientation from roughly the beginning of September onwards. It is at this time, for example, that your weekly box of a hundred cigarettes begins its four-month encasement in an extra cardboard sleeve, depicting stage-coaches in deep snow, and known to the retail tobacco trade as "the Christmas outer." Board of Trade statisticians estimate that seventeen thousand tons of cardboard are seasonally devoted to these unsought embellishments, and municipal refuse-disposal authorities confirm that roughly the same weight goes into the nation's dust-bins.

Outside Influences (b) Entertainment: It will be found necessary to disconnect all radio and television receivers during

the period December 10 to January 10: even outside these limits there is considerable danger of tangential references to impending or savoured jollities. Even such seemingly safe programmes as "The Critics" may slip in sly references to Pantomime as early as December 1, and "At Home and Abroad" may well transmit an interview with Father Christmas. The first "Music While You Work" carol medley usually goes out round about November 20, and The Archers could talk turkey profits until the second Sunday after Epiphany. However, the main threat is from the TV commercials. Santa Claus is personally selling beer, gas-fires, frozen foods and do-it-yourself kits for at least a ten-week run. All magazines and newspapers must of course be cancelled during the affected season. There is little or no defence against carols diffused by public-address system vans, though most good chemists sell boxes of wax ear-plugs these days. (Get yours before it goes into its gay Christmas pack.)

Rejected Gifts. During the fortnight of most intensive activity, December 8-22, full use should be made of a little-known G.P.O. service. You have only to hand back all parcels, letters, etc., to the postman and he will take them away, mark them "Refused," and have them returned to sender at Post Office expense. As with your Warning Letters, correspondence will ensue. Ignore it. Next year you won't see the postman at all.

So there is the master plan. If your determination to execute it fails at a single point your whole defence system will collapse, and the torrents of yet another Christmas will rush in. Stand firm, and your ambition of ten years or more will be achieved at last. Nothing remains but to decide what to do while the rest of the world is—incredibly enough—having a wonderful time. The choice, unfortunately, is not large. As a mere suggestion, why not go out on Christmas Eve (a year from to-day exactly) and drown yourself?

★

"In *The Fly* a man emerges from an experiment with the head and left-arm of a fly, and a fly with the head and arm of a man. A spokesman for the distributors said: 'You can't get this sort of thing on television.'"—*Daily Telegraph*

But shouldn't he have been a spokesman for television?

The Child in My Life

By PATRICK RYAN

SOMEONE saw fit to record the other day that seven hundred and forty-five thousand copies had been sold to date of those poems about Christopher Robin saying his prayers and going to Buckingham Palace with Alice. Which fact suggests that at least seven hundred and forty-five thousand children have noted the accepted behaviour-patterns, and probably accounts for my social circle being littered with the parents of droll and winsome offspring. From the way these beaming nellies and bright-eyed charlies

carry on, all the kids in our neck of the woods are Christopher Robin conformists, cracking the same cosy infant gags, plugging the same whimsy routine and coyly remembering Mummy and Daddy at the end of their prayers.

The only time my daughter voluntarily remembered me in her prayers she said she'd be obliged if God would drop a thunderbolt on her father and arrange for his teeth to rot clean right down to the gums; if possible, beyond.

She was eight and a half at the time and under considerable emotional stress



"Mine reads 'Four dinners—12 guineas.'"



"I see he's in-mourning."

due to the bitter last-ditch stand I was making about eternal Westerns on the television.

Not that my daughter doesn't come out with her quota of cute and memorable remarks. She gets just as many winners over as the Christopher Robin kids. But, while their quaint witticisms could be straight out of A. A. Milne, her contributions would be appropriate only as captions to Charles Addams cartoons. No warm gush of parental fudge follows her pronouncements. Instead they leave me chilled and thoughtful, emphasizing my well-developed insecurity and giving me the impression for days afterwards that I'm being followed, that someone, somewhere, is holding a clock on me.

The first cold moment came when she was five. It was during her religious period and she'd just returned from one of her first lessons at Sunday school. I had been dozing all afternoon and was in a pretty defenceless state. While she took off her scarves and boots and things she studied me carefully. She looked me all over from top to toe, as if she were buying me in a slave-market.

"God made me, Daddy," she announced triumphantly. "Who made you?"

Her tone was one of fascinated inquiry. It was obvious that if God



"Daddy," she said suddenly, "would a giraffe eat a lamp-shade?"

No preamble, no warning, right out of the blue. Would a giraffe eat a lamp-shade? . . . Not *could*, mark you, not is it hypothetically possible. But *would*. Would a giraffe, uncoerced, by choice and of its own free will and volition, eat a lamp-shade?

I was in no shape at eight o'clock on a Monday morning to cope with that sort of stuff, and so the affair took the familiar course . . . all that stock routine about it's a silly question, and why is it a silly question, and you know quite well why it is, and tears all round and you can't even ask a simple question in this house without everybody losing their temper, and never mind, dear, you know what your father's like in the morning, and indigestion throbbing all the way down to the station.

On the journey to the office that grotesque arrangement of words echoed over and over inside my head, smothering all attempts at any other consecutive thought. The picture of that great gentle beast crouched on its knees in someone's front room, trying to lower its everlasting neck to get at the lamp-shade, blanked everything else out of my mind and I found myself repeating the question over and over again under my breath.

I had to attend a conference that morning and this important chap from headquarters was there, full of dynamic approach and get-up-and-go and stomach ulcers. He was going on like steam about the new mechanized accounting system, slashing out penetrating questions right and left. He noticed me down the table, deep in my trance.

"What," he shot at me, "would you say, Ryan, is the first basic organizational question we've got to ask ourselves?"

Automatically, my lips delivered what was in my hypnotized mind. I said, God help me, "Would a giraffe eat a lamp-shade?"

This important chap damned nearly went airborne. I was whipped straight off the promotion list and, given any encouragement, they'd have certified me.

Being female, my daughter joined by instinct the monstrous regiment devoted to my criticism and redemption, and quickly picked up the phrases which

commiserating wives murmur at her mother's coffee-table. And so, soon after denting my career with her giraffe, she also took a swipe at my private reputation. One night, when we were leaving for a party, she leaned out of her bedroom window to bid her parents a last farewell.

"Have a good time, Mummy," she yelled in a voice that echoed up and down the road. "And please don't let him drink too much, will you?"

Lights came on all along the block, curtains flickered in satisfaction, and you could hear the purring of telephone dials as the hot news was flashed over the network. The child's heart-cry got to the party before me and I spent a fugitive evening, plied by the hostess with fruit-juice and non-alcoholic cider, and watched avidly by the guests as they waited impatiently for the old dipsy to keel over.

Shortly afterwards I was trimming a door with a cut-throat razor when I overshot and snicked a piece clean off the tip of my little finger. It wasn't a big piece, just the curve neatly chamfered off, but it bled lustily and got me worked up a bit. My daughter watched sympathetically while I was soothed, brandied, laughed at, and patched up. When all was done she came up to me, one hand clenched as if holding a caterpillar.

"Can I have this, please?" she said.

She uncurled her fingers and showed a little pink shaving lying in her palm. It was the sliver of flesh I'd cut off my finger.

"What do you want it for?" I asked. It was during the battle of the Westerns and I feared she might be planning to attack with Voodoo or some form of sympathetic magic.

"I want to take it to school and show everybody." She chuckled as she visualized her triumph. "I bet I'm the only one that's got a real live piece of her father in their collection."

She took my shiver for assent and went away. My fears about Voodoo were dispelled the next day when I learnt that she had given it to her best friend for her budgerigar. They had a theory that a little fresh meat now and again was a tit-bit for a budgerigar and, as she emphasized, you couldn't get anything much fresher than my contribution. Her friend gave her a picture-postcard of Blackpool Tower

for the piece of her father, and now comes round to watch hopefully whenever I am on carpentry.

The Joan of Arc episode, which occurred when we were very young, gave me a queasy forty-eight hours. She was at kindergarten and the way to school crossed a busy main road. She was under pain-of-death instructions never to cross this road by herself. If, by chance, her mother was late collecting her from school, she could come home as far as the main road but was to wait on the other side until her escort arrived.

One day, just as the escort was setting out, Madam herself came through the front gate. The house filled with horror and she was asked for an explanation. She said that she was standing on the other side of the road, waiting for her mother, when God spoke to her saying "That's a good girl. You can go across now."

She collected the rough edge of everybody's tongue, a homily on child accident statistics, and a warning about blasphemy. I pressed for details of the Pronouncement but she clammed up and would only say that it was a voice from the clouds.

The next day, oblivious to all rockets, the same thing happened . . . she came across the main road by herself, and swore, once again, that God had told her to. She heard him distinctly but, because of all the fuss we'd made, she waited till he said it twice before she crossed. In answer to all parental attacks she blandly inquired how could it be wrong to do anything if God told you to? She was so blithely certain about her conversation with God that I grew worried and uneasy. Maybe I had another Joan of Arc, a junior Mother Shipton on my hands, hearing inner voices, instructions from the clouds, liable at any time to go off on a crusade or some similar mission which would involve her father in unmanageable situations and formidable expense. History doesn't say much about Joan of Arc's father but I bet he had the thin time of it. I've seen the parents of some of those American child evangelists and they mostly looked as if they had a terrible life keeping up with their heavenly offspring.

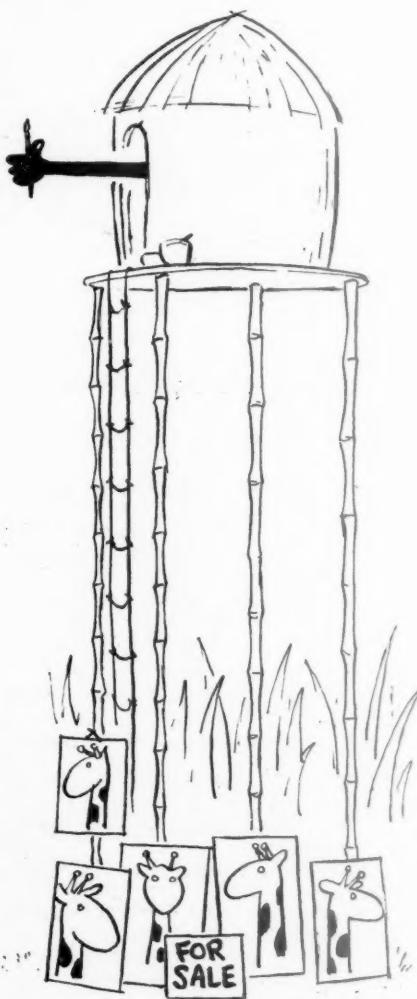
So, next day, I went up to meet Madam myself. I got to the main road good and early, and waited, concealed from view, to see what would happen.

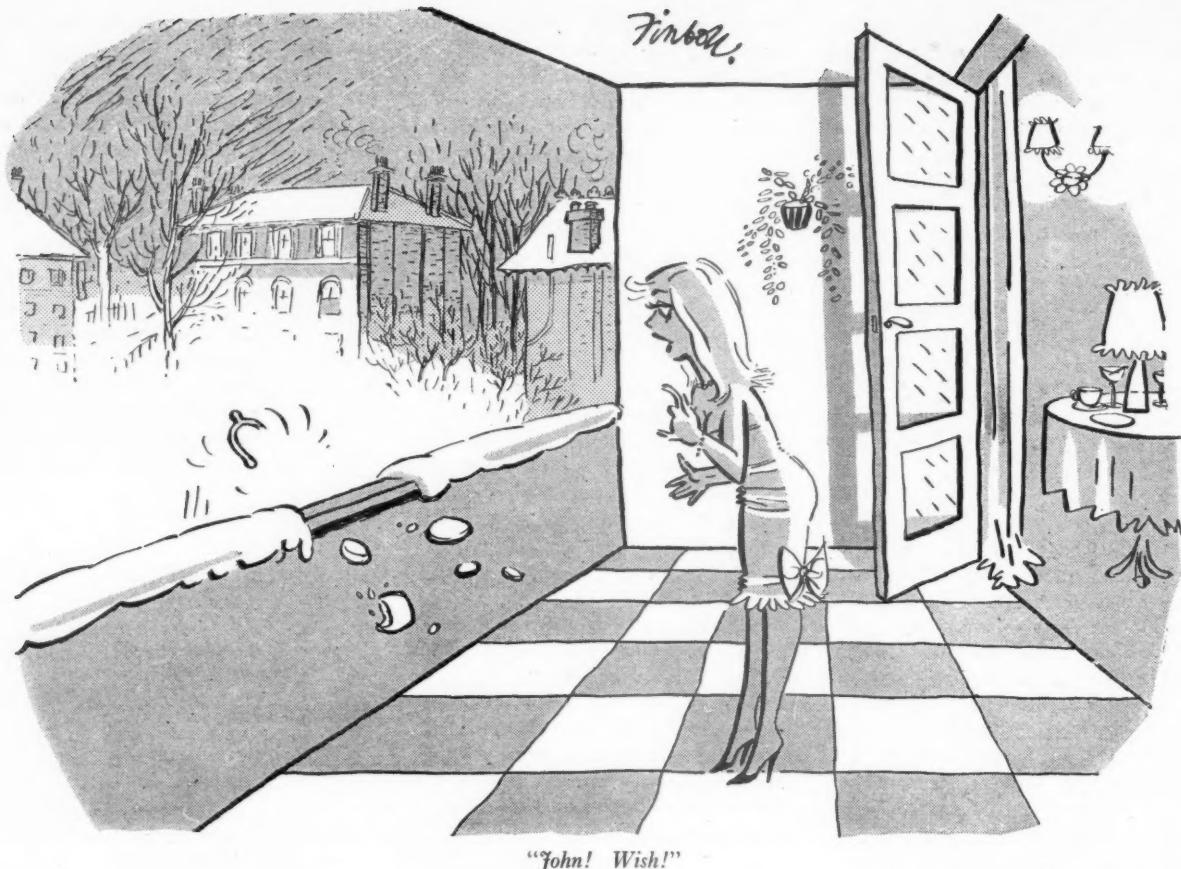
She came up the hill opposite and waited around for a while at the grocer's, the set rendezvous. Then she went along to the edge of the pavement and solemnly practised her kerb-drill. There came a lull in the traffic and a mighty voice boomed out.

"That's a good girl. You can cross now. Off you go."

It was the Borough Road Safety Week and a police-car with loud-speaker was stationed in a side road. Out of sight, a policeman was commenting into a microphone on the rights and wrongs of passing pedestrians. His voice boomed out from nowhere, from everywhere, echoing among the buildings, rumbling mysteriously down from the clouds.

c Patrick Ryan 1958





"John! Wish!"

Quiz Solutions

1. IN THE BEGINNING

- (i) (b)
- (ii) (a) and (y). (b) and (x). (c) and (v)
- (d) and (z). (e) and (w)
- (iii) (a) and (w) (*The Boscombe Valley Mystery*). (b) and (x) (*Ukrige and the Home from Home*). (c) and (v) (*Three Men in a Boat*). (d) and (z) (*The Case of the Lame Canary*). (e) and (y) (*Crome Yellow*)

2. THIS KEEN ENCOUNTER OF OUR WITTICISMS

- (a) Stephen Leacock (*Nonsense Novels*)
- (b) Samuel Butler (*The Way of all Flesh*)
- (c) P. G. Wodehouse (*Summer Lighting*)
- (d) Evelyn Waugh (*Love Among the Ruins*)
- (e) Bernard Shaw (*Man and Superman*)
- (f) Oscar Wilde (*obiter dictum*)
- (g) Mark Twain (*obiter dictum*)
- (h) Sydney Smith (*in a letter to a little girl*)
- (i) Douglas Jerrold (*obiter dictum*)
- (j) W. S. Gilbert (*Ruddigore*)

3. UNCOUPLED KIPLING

- (a) Pagett, M.P.
- (b) The Betrothed
- (c) The Ballad of East and West
- (d) The English Flag
- (e) Danny Deever
- (f) Tommy
- (g) Oonts
- (h) "Fuzzy-Wuzzy"
- (i) Mandalay
- (j) The Lesson (Boer War)
- (k) "Soldier an' Sailor Too"
- (l) The Absent-minded Beggar
- (m) Mandalay
- (n) A Smuggler's Song
- (o) The Gods of the Copybook Headings
- (p) The Law of the Jungle
- (q) Big Steamers
- (r) Mother o' Mine

4. DOGS

- (1) Sprod. (2) Siggs. (3) Quentin Blake.
- (4) Sherriffs. (5) Anton. (6) "Fougasse."
- (7) Eric Burgin.

5. CRICKETERS

- (a) (1) Alfred Valentine. (2) Neil Harvey.
- (3) Sonny Ramadhin. (4) James Burke.
- (5) Richie Benaud. (6) Keith Miller.
- (7) Gil Langley. (8) Ian Craig. (9) Colin Macdonald. (10) Peter Burge. (11) Ray Lindwall. (12) Alan Davidson. (b) 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12.

6. FOR GOURMETS

- (a) baked in breadcrumbs and served in the dish it was cooked in. (b) with sauce of butter and *fines herbes*. (c) with plain white sauce enriched with cream. (d) with butter sauce with yolk of egg and vinegar. (e) with truffles cream and cheese (of soles). (f) with Béchamel sauce to which grated cheese is added. (g) with a basic brown sauce plus tomatoes and mushrooms (of chicken). (h) virtually the same as Meunière. (i) with Hollandaise sauceplus shallots and tarragon.

7. BLUE REMEMBERED HILLS

- (a) Chimborazo, Cotopaxi; (b) Matterhorn; (c) Helvellyn; (d) Skiddaw

8. WHODUNIT?

- (a) Doyle (Conan and Richard)
- (b) Christie (Agatha and James)
- (c) Marsh (Ngaio and Sir Edward)
- (d) Cheyney (Peter and *The Last of Mrs.*)
- (e) Wallace (Edgar and Sir William)
- (f) Collins (Wilkie and *Pride and Prejudice* character)
- (g) Hare (Cyril and Burke's confederate)
- (h) Sayers (Dorothy and Tom)
- (i) Bentley (E. C. and Dick)
- (j) Allingham (Margery and William)

In the City



"No—and don't ask us why"

THE Capital Issues Committee is a strange relic of the half-forgotten world of controls that necessarily flourished during the war and unnecessarily outlived their usefulness when the age of scarcities and the need for enforced priorities had passed. The Committee consists of able, highly respectable and experienced men who devote to it a great deal of time and do it as a public service. They assess and pass their verdict on all demands for capital issues of £50,000 or over. In their work they are aided by general directives from the Chancellor of the Exchequer which tell them how fierce or lenient to be and what types of capital issues to encourage and discourage. When it comes to detailed interpretation of these directives (whether company A should be allowed to raise capital to extend its plant in B or erect a new factory in C) the Capital Issues Committee will get the guidances of the Government departments concerned—the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour and the rest.

All this appears to be ship-shape and above board; but the question is why should these eminent gentlemen, even with all the official advice available to them, be set up as judges of what is and what is not a desirable capital venture? Let us take the recent case of the Midland Bank. It wanted, and no doubt still wants, to raise additional capital by an issue of shares to existing shareholders. The Directors of the Midland Bank presumably know their business and they are as eminent and experienced as the members of the C.I.C. They have for some time felt that owing to the growth of their deposits, the ratio between their own resources, capital and reserves and their liabilities to the public has fallen too low. They (and many other bank directors take the same view) wished to raise that proportion. They put their request to the Capital Issues Committee, whose answer was "No."

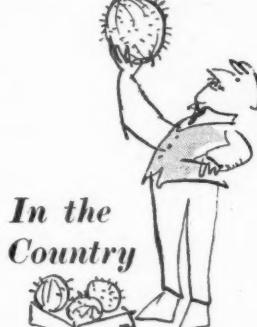
Why was permission refused? No one knows—or will ever know unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer can be needled into giving the explanation. The C.I.C. does not have to account for its decisions. Its judgments are those of the first and final court. There is no appeal against it. And yet the result of a turn-down could be damaging. The banks have recently been engaging in pioneer work of all kinds—getting interested in the ownership of hire purchase finance companies, opening personal loan accounts, granting life cover to their debtor customers who die in harness. The C.I.C. refusal might imply an official condemnation of all these activities. Or it might reflect criticism of the bank's building programmes. Whatever the reason, it should be given, because uncertainty in these matters could carry the hint of disapproval which in the world of banking is a serious disservice.

If some authority such as the C.I.C. had been in existence at the turn of the century can one doubt what would have been its answer to the "lunatic" who wanted to raise capital in order to manufacture textile fibres out of wood pulp? It is in no better position to-day to decide whether what the banks are doing deserves fresh capital.

The Midland have gone ahead with the second part of their proposal, the capitalization of reserves through the issue of bonus shares. Martins have announced a comparable scheme. This brings no new capital into the business, but to transfer some millions from reserve to issued capital is a sign of confidence. It also provides the opportunity in each case for a modest increase in future dividend distributions—a clear indication that, as was argued here last week, the banks have "had it good" this year.

LOMBARD LANE

* * *



In the Country

The Giant of Giant Gooseberries

IN an era when size is worshipped in the vegetable, fruit, and flower worlds, it seems fitting to recall the remarkable popularity of giant gooseberries, which started in the second half of the eighteenth century and reached a crescendo in the following one.

The Industrial North with its cool moist climate was the cradle of the giant gooseberry cult, for here in counties like Lancashire and Cheshire gooseberries grew better than in any other locality in the British Isles, or abroad for that matter. They reached their perfection in cottage gardens where the bushes were cosseted and cherished to a degree we find hard to comprehend to-day.

As early as 1786 a Gooseberry Register appeared with lists of the local shows and societies and a table giving the weights of the prize fruits in pennyweights and grains. The workers were rapidly going gooseberry mad. In 1825 all records were broken by a gargantuan fruit weighing over two ounces. This

variety, fittingly named London, was introduced into commerce in 1831 by Mr. J. Banks of Acton, Northwich. For size it is said never to have been surpassed; for flavour it had no particular merit. As to cropping there was no thought, as the fruits were generally reduced to a mere four or five per bush to ensure maximum size.

By 1845 the Gooseberry Register recorded a record of one hundred and seventy-one shows for that year, and the prizes, which ranged from handsome brass kettles and pans to the always useful cash, were in proportion. The weavers of the industrial north in the last half of the century were now growing gooseberries with a mania similar to that which the Dutch once showed for tulips. But as the nineteenth century drew to a close the cultivation of giant gooseberries declined, slowly but steadily.

Famous names of show varieties then included Farrow's Roaring Lion, Davenport's Creeping Ceres, Dan's Mistake, Lancashire Lad, Rider's Scented Lemon, Crown Bob, and Leveller. It is amusing how many of these names carry that of the introducer as well, thus assuring a certain immortality. To-day giant gooseberries are little grown and to many of us are virtually unknown. Yet we find listed in the Supplement (1956) to the Royal Horticultural Society's *Dictionary of Gardening* many of the same varieties with the same splendid names. Yes, even London, the one-time giant of giant gooseberries.

LANNING ROPER

Toby Competitions

No. 48—Convivial

PROVIDE the name and rules of a party game calculated to bring the party to an end.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries (any number but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, January 2, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 48, *Punch*, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 45 (21 Plus)

Competitors were asked to provide the first three questions for a practical examination in modern citizenship. There was a small, angry, enjoyable entry, but only one competitor,

E. A. CAPELL
240, FERME PARK ROAD
HORNSEY
LONDON, N.8,

was successful in riding three hobby-horses. His entries (which were submitted in a suitably contemporary spelling) are those asterisked below.

A collation of other entries suggests that an examination paper in Modern Citizenship would look something like this:

UNIVERSITY OF HACKNEY MARSHES

Examination Paper

Modern Citizenship

(Time: 3 hours less ten minutes' tea break)

Candidates should attempt four questions, one from each section. If apparatus is required the appropriate form should be obtained from the invigilator and completed in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Section I. DOMESTIC SCIENCE

(1) Bring a suitable mental resistance to bear on the advertisement which will be shown to you. Give five good reasons why you should not purchase the item advertised.

(2) Take a freshly shampooed and correctly trimmed poodle for a walk in a suitably graceful manner, bypassing all locals.*

(3) Sit down and look comfortable in a contemporary arm-chair.*

(4) Wearing the duffel coat provided, enter the coffee-bar, which will be kept at a mean temperature of 83 degrees F., and serve sixty cups of coffee within half an hour.*

Section II. SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

(5) Collect, control, organize and entertain, for not less than forty minutes, a gang of not less than thirty armed teddy-boys.

(6) Conduct a specimen inquiry into the thought-processes of those who regularly watch TV parlour games. List the changes which occur when narcosis takes place.

Section III. POLITICS AND PLANNING

(7) Make a fully labelled scale-model of the apparatus you would use to detect the presence of Communists in a trade union. State what precautions you would take in setting up the apparatus, and describe its probable results.

(8) How would you either lead or oppose a crusade organized by owners of Regency houses on a steep hill in the centre of an expanding industrial city who are threatened with a compulsory purchase scheme not promoted by the local Corporation?

(9) Design a specimen wash-room for a new school ensuring that:

- (a) All materials used are British
- (b) Democracy and Intellectual Ability go hand in hand
- (c) The pupils cannot steal the plugs.

Section IV. ADVANCED CIVIL DEFENCE

- (10) (i) Make a fire by rubbing two sticks together
- (ii) Show that you can gather food from the countryside
- (iii) Do ritual drawings on a suitable surface (e.g. the wall of a cave.)

Book-token winners are Margaret Dunnett, Bark Place, Berks Hill, Chorleywood; J. M. Hollis, Bramblings, Park Road, Limpfield; Mrs. Sylvia Beare, 12 Tyndall Avenue, Bristol; Rev. J. W. G. Masterton, 105 Newark Street, Greenock; Keith Eller, Newland Park College, Chalfont St. Giles; Mrs. G. M. Aitken, School House, East Coker, Yeovil.

Christmas Thought

WHEN a journalist sifts the Yule-tide gifts

Our emporia have on sale,
From a skiffler's scarf to a hamster's cot,
And a tie with a self-adjusting knot,
Or a magazine-rack-cum-cactus-pot,
Or a gadget that sorts the mail—

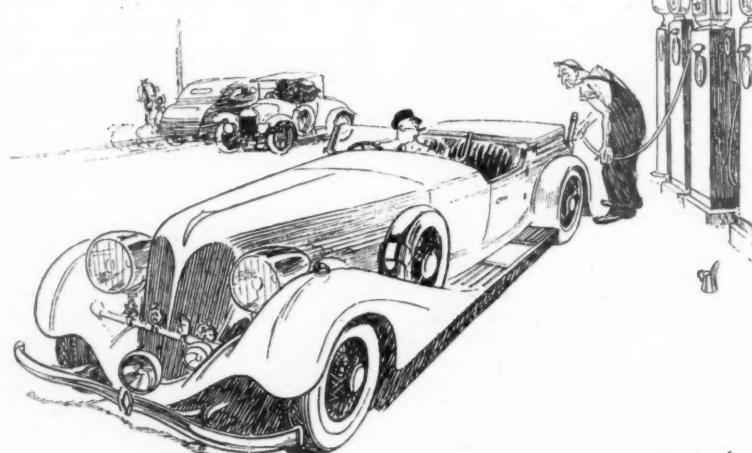
My reaction is swift to each new gift

That the journalist writes about,
From a Chilean chant for your hi-fi
To a flashlight pen or a two-tone dye,
What a staggering number of products I
Can happily live without!

FRANK LITTLER

CHESTNUT GROVE

As long ago as 1936 Mays anticipated the problems which now bedevil the owners of vast American cars.



"DO YOU MIND SWITCHING OFF, SIR? SHE'S GAINING ON ME."

October 14, 1936

Essence of

Parliament

ABRAHAM LINCOLN might well have said that you cannot please all of the back-benchers all of the time. The general back-bencher complaint is of the inadequacy of their opportunities. Yet when at last Mr. Mawby gets the chance to bring in a useful little bill about furniture which receives a promise of Government support and seems to have a reasonable chance of getting on the Statute Book, Mr. Dudley Williams is not content with criticizing it, which is fair enough, but complains that such a bill ought only to be brought in by the Government. Is there no pleasing these back-benchers? Do they prefer to be kicked? What do they want? Last week Mr. Callaghan—Opposition but admittedly not a back-bencher—was complaining that we would not sell arms to Indonesia. This week Mr. Delargy, very white with indignation and angry with the Speaker, was complaining that we were selling arms to Cuba. Back-bencher jostled back-bencher for position on the subjects that they wanted to air before they went off on their Christmas holidays—Cuba, Suez, Obscene Publications, Unemployment—and what was a little ominous was the growing disrespect shown to the Speaker in their jostlings. It was perhaps Obscene Publications

—thanks to discreet noises from Sir Alan Herbert from the direction of Harrow—which came off best. Mr. Roy Jenkins, as he always does, made a most admirable speech, watched in pensive wonder by a couple of nuns in the front row of the Strangers' Gallery. Under the present law, argued Mr. Jenkins, there is perhaps more pornography published than in any other country and at the same time the maximum of insecurity for authors and publishers—unless indeed they have the good fortune to be dead. We get the worst of both

worlds—this one and the next. There is not, as in other topics, a perhaps illogical but working *status quo* which we should be hesitant to overthrow. Mr. Bonham-Carter and Mr. Rawlinson supported him in equally admirable speeches, and indeed the "objectors" were overwhelmed by the sheer logic of the argument. Yet of course what matters is not logic but whether the Government will give facilities for the bill. For the moment, in spite of Mr. Chuter Ede's justifiable doubts, it looks slight odds on Mr. Butler actually doing something, what between logic and by-elections.

Colonel Wigg started off the Suez debate with a moderate speech, and it was he who came out of the whole business with the greatest credit. Mr. Head's defence of Sir Anthony Eden was surely far more damaging to Sir Anthony than any of the criticisms of him either by Mr. Randolph Churchill or by the Socialists. The soldiers, argued Mr. Head, did all that they possibly could have done, but the less that the soldiers were to blame the more, as Mr. Bevan and Mr. Crossman fairly argued, the

politicians have to answer for. Mr. Head asserted that Sir Anthony Eden had seen the necessity of "taking a stand against the infiltration and erosion of Communism" in Egypt, but he seemed to have forgotten that the ultimatum on which we allegedly fought had nothing to do with this issue. It looked as if Mr. Yates, anti-Suez Conservative, was trying to say something of this sort, but he did not get the chance. It fell to Sir Charles Mott-Radclyffe to continue the debate, and he, whether by accident or subtle design, switched it off to the

quite different secondary issue of the Socialists' conduct at that time. If the Socialists had had a grain of sense they would have insisted that that was not the present subject of debate. As it was they fell for the red herring as if it were a blonde. Whereas last week they had complained that the Government had not sent a spokesman to listen to their speeches, now, when a Government spokesman, Mr. Soames, attempted to speak they shouted him down and insisted that the time might be taken up by Socialist speakers offering their own apologies. There comes a point where ineptitude is hardly of this world. There is an element in it that is almost supernatural.

Wednesday's unemployment debate had been advertised as the great debate of the week, but it did not amount to much. Mr. Griffiths has quite a good speech, but he has only one speech. One cannot listen to it more than a certain number of times. Sir David Eccles, like Mr. Sandys the week before, gave the impression that he had the greatest difficulty in keeping awake through his own speech. Mr. Jack Jones tried to liven things up a bit, but it was too late. Mrs. McLaughlin threw down a somewhat synthetic Red Hand of Ulster, and Mr. Macleod dealt competently and confidently enough with the customary nine-thirty bear-garden.

On Thursday the House met to adjourn for Christmas. The waste-paper-basket caught fire, but nobody minded much. PERCY SOMERSET

"GEMINI (May 21—June 20): The day finds you rather horrid to know. You are witty, over-active, sarcastic, and argumentative and severely critical of other people's shortcomings . . ."—*Daily Express*

Keep your blasted half-baked twaddle to yourself.



Mr. Christopher Soames



Mr. Roy Jenkins

Henry and Lulu

On the way to Gretna Green

"I SEE Floosie Dart's got married," said Lulu crossly, flipping the pages of the *Tatler*.

"Floosie Dart?"

"Florence Dartington. We were at school together."

"You're not pleased?"

"Well, I hate to hear of friends getting married. Particularly happily. It makes me feel unwanted and hideous."

Henry stifled his hot denials. Lulu was obviously enjoying the rare sensation of being abandoned and he was too unselfish to spoil it.

"Why don't you get married then?"

"That's just the trouble, darling. Don't you see I hate the idea? It's not only being tied to one dreary man when there are so many honeybuns to choose from, but there's that awful circus first."

"The wedding, you mean."

First of a series of short stories by MONICA FURLONG

"Did you ever see anything so vulgar? Rows of pasty, hump-backed girls in organdie, and babies brawling in the aisle, and terrible old aunties raked out of decent retirement in Shropshire. It's too awful."

"There's always the registrar's office."

"You mean that rabbit-hutch behind the Army and Navy? Thank you, I'm not an adulterous actress." Lulu was in a blissful fit of bad temper, yearning to find someone she could scratch with her long orange finger-nails.

"Couldn't your father arrange some sort of private wedding for you?"

Lulu got up and began moving nervously round the room, flicking her long fawn and silver hair in irritation.

"I suppose so. But Daddy's so High. One would never get away with less than a Nuptial Mass, and that takes days."

"Why not elope then, and see what Nonconformity could do for you?"

"That tatty place in Scotland, you mean. I suppose one *could*." Lulu paused and frowned at herself in the mirror, trying with one hand the effect of her hair in a chignon.

"Ye—es . . . I suppose . . . Quick, Henry, who does that remind you of?"

"Marlene Dietrich. Blue Angel," he said promptly.

"You really are heaven, Henry." Lulu was delighted. "And I was only thinking of Grace Kelly too." Depression gone, she picked up a black lace evening stole and tried the effect of it over her head.

"Wouldn't that fetch the Vatican?"

"Not with those bare arms."

"I can never see what's so seductive about arms. All elbows and gooseflesh. Yes, definitely I think elopement would be an idea. Now the only question is—who with?"

"There's me," offered Henry, superstitiously not hoping.

"Would you though? I mean wouldn't Inland Revenue wonder where you'd got to?"

"I've got three weeks' leave as it happens," Henry said, wondering how he could engineer three weeks' leave.

"Oh, it wouldn't take that long. But how would one go? I reject horses. I grew out of fetlocks and bog spavins when I was fifteen."

"Bubble-car."

"Of course. Henry, do you know, I am rather tempted. It would show Floosie Dart, wouldn't it? Let's do it." Lulu's blue eyes shone like jewels with the excitement of it. "I could wear my new pebble tweed. And I bet one could pick up some lovely cashmeres in Scotland. Henry, you are marvellous, and I love you for thinking of it." And she threw her arms round his neck and kissed him warmly.

"But I say, Lulu, you do realize what's involved, don't you? I mean it's not just a holiday in Scotland and all that. Marriage, you know, is not



"I'll show him who's boss; I'm going to switch off his electric blanket."

just a joke—it's a serious business, and . . ."

"Shouldn't you go and see if the bubble-car's in order? No point in hanging about. Could we start the day after to-morrow, do you think? That would give me time to go to the hair-dressers first."

Henry gave up. He had tried to explain. Marry the girl first, he thought now, and explain afterwards. Lulu was as nervous of marriage as of Russian roulette, and if any bullet had to hit her he would prefer it to be his.

They set out soon after breakfast and the wedding mood was fractured almost at once by a splitting thunderstorm. The sky had a decayed look. "Mortuary grey-green," observed Lulu.

They spun along over the roads and their conversation, which had been slow even to start with, grew less and less.

"I keep thinking about dying," Lulu said. "I do wish one didn't have to, don't you?"

"Whatever made you think of such a thing?" Henry asked.

"Oh, I don't know." Lulu was troubled and vague. "I always think of it when I'm feeling low. One feels one might as well."

"But my dear girl, you're supposed to be feeling happy. You're going to get married."

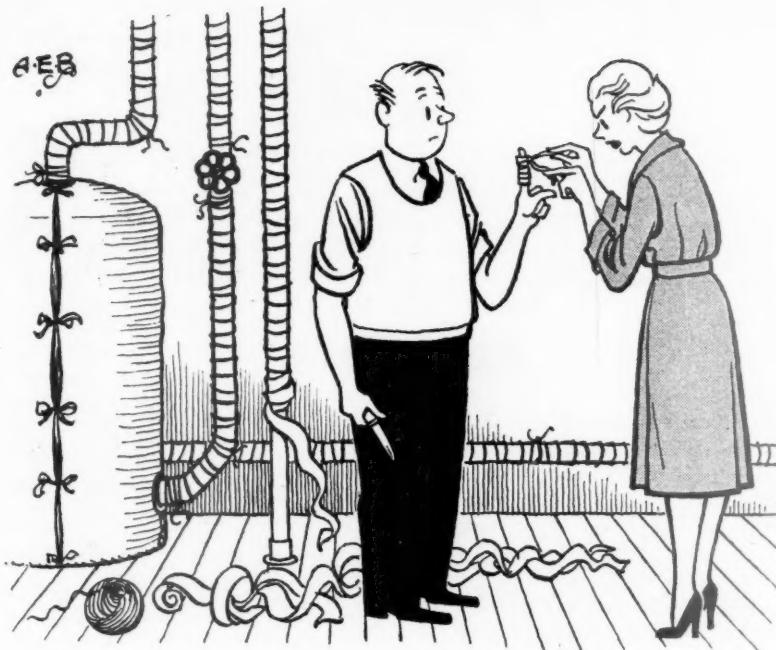
"Oh yes, well, I'm frightfully happy too, of course," but Lulu crouched in her seat like a small mournful linnet in a cage.

Pre-nuptial nerves, said Henry to himself. That's all it is. She'll feel better when it's over, and he drove on determinedly northwards. "Think how mad Floosie Dart will be when she hears," he said in a flash of inspiration.

"Poor old Floosie. She was always such a jolly creature—fat, you know, and plain, but terribly jolly. Who could have guessed that she would be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice?"

"What rubbish you talk," said Henry crossly, feeling that Lulu was gradually shrinking beside him like a character in a Greek myth and that by the time they got to Gretna all that would be left was a wilting celandine.

He drove on furiously towards Doncaster silently rehearsing the rights of the situation to himself. After all,



she agreed to come; I didn't force her at all, she was perfectly willing. And now, just because she's got cold feet, it's no reason, no reason at all to give way to her. Show weakness this time and I'll never bring her up to scratch again. But all of a sudden he was conscious of a small damp patch on his knee that grew wetter and wetter as the tears on Lulu's cheeks gathered momentum. He stopped the car, not looking at Lulu, and glared grimly out at the road ahead.

"So you don't love me," he said in a hurt voice.

"Henry, it's not that. I *adore* you It's just that I don't want to get married." The tears came now in a perfect cascade. "I said I would . . . and I did mean to . . . and then I didn't like to tell you . . . and I'll still go through with it, of course . . . after all, I promised . . . but I keep thinking of how awful it all is."

Henry looked at the huge china eyes glazed with tears, the small terrified face still prepared to go bravely through with it if he insisted, and he received a shot of love so powerful that it made earlier doses seem like a teenager's reefer. Without a word he turned the car.

Just as the northward miles had diminished Lulu so the southward ones

seemed to fill her out again. By the time they swept into Chelsea in the dark, rain-soaked evening she had lifted her head with the glad, debonair motion of a migrating bird who smells Africa below it.

"Do come in for some coffee," she said. "And I think I've got some brandy too, left over from my 'flu."

In the narrow hallway of the flat she squeezed his arm and said "Henry, I do love you tremendously," and it was clear she meant it. Then she went to the mirror as she always did on coming home to see whether time had made any startling erosions on her face.

Henry, dumb with exhaustion in an armchair, heard a wail of terror from the hall that made the blood freeze in his veins.

"The most awful thing! I've found a *black hair* on my chin. Henry, I'm turning into a bearded lady. It's ghastly. Nobody will ever want to marry me now." And she began to cry all over again.

Darker-Than-Ever Continent

"ELSPETH
HUXLEY
COVERS
AFRICA"

Time and Tide poster

**FOR
WOMEN**



Left-Overs

ONE day someone will write a recipe book that bears some relation to life as it is really lived. One day a recipe book which gives a recipe for meringues (take six egg whites) will tell one what to do with six egg yolks. And a salad recipe will give suggestions as to what to do next day with the five soggy lettuce leaves still in the bottom of the bowl.

The left-overs in a household are dark secrets, eaten surreptitiously by the woman-at-home-for-lunch. She doesn't have to face congealed cold sausage, two cold sprouts, a mouldering half of an avocado pear and a stale slice of cake. She can always boil an egg. But no true housewife worth her housekeeping money can bear to throw Good Food away. With any luck the steak-and-kidney pudding grows green fur and can be tipped out of sight with a clear conscience. But now that we all have refrigerators left-overs can often take weeks to go bad. Sometimes it is

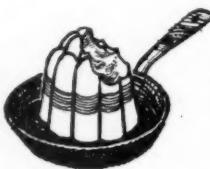
impossible to remember just what that grey stuff on the cracked saucer hidden behind the dripping bowl is.

The Left-Over Recipe Book which I have in mind will cope with all this. Its index will have entries like:

Rinds, bacon.	With
Cabbage	p. 16
Caviar	4
Custard	31
Doughnuts	40
Endive	12

Any housewife used to permutations on the pools will find its cross-referencing quite simple.

The Left-Over Recipe Book will also have a diet section for the woman-at-home-for-lunch, who, used to eating fried-up messes, is trying to follow a chicken-wheatgerm-poached-plaice diet. Her problem is a difficult one. On the second day of the diet she faces *left-over* chicken and wheatgerm and poached plaice. The Left-Over Recipe Book will point out that even the



Step Talk

NOT to-day, thank you. No, really, I mean it. Nothing. Please don't bother to undo your case.

No, no brushes whatsoever, thank you. I have a hair brush. My husband has a hair brush. My daughter has a hair brush. We all share the bath brush. Yes, and we have tooth brushes. Two each, in fact. No, stay . . . I think we are down to five between three now, one has been demoted to doing behind the taps . . . but there is still a jolly mixed bunch in the mug on the bathroom window-sill.

Yes, I agree that it is an exceptionally sturdy scrubbing brush. I bought one last time you came. You remember? That day with the particularly keen east wind? Rather like to-day, but without the rain?

No, I do not need a back brush, shaving brush, hearth brush, saucepan brush, bath brush or double-sided nail brush.

We peel all our vegetables on principle.

Nor do I want a new soft broom head, though I freely admit that the way the pure bristles spring back after you've stood on them is almost miraculous.

strangest vegetables are nicest cold with a lemon juice dressing and that any left-over main course is best reheated in the oven under aluminium foil—not fried up.

Left-over cooking should present a unique opportunity for culinary experimentation. The woman-at-home-for-lunch has it within her power to widen the whole compass of gastronomic experience. She can mix golden syrup with fried bacon . . . stewed apples with cold cod . . . steak and cornflakes. No one need know of her failures. (She can always boil an egg.)

One day the woman-at-home-for-lunch will hit on the perfect combination of tastes and textures. It is a triumph, a masterpiece of imagination. But it is a triumph never to be repeated. Never again will she be able to lay her hands on exactly the same ingredients. Never again will she have a slice of Christmas pudding, leek soup, one sardine and the tail-end of a Worcester sauce bottle. But next day, by following the Left-Over Recipe Book, she can try again—or have a boiled egg.

PHOEBE WINCH

Chinese dog bristle? Chinese? Dog? You amaze me. I'd no idea we could still trade with China. How on earth do they get the stuff out over that Great Curtain? I mean Iron Wall?

Really, is that so? What a grasp of world affairs you have. No, I still don't want one. I want nothing at all to-day.

A free sample of polish? For me? Well, that's extraordinarily kind . . . I hardly like . . . well, thank you.

One moment. What price is that weeny little brush in the corner? Yes, that miniature Christmas tree affair. Isn't it simply sweet? Three-and-six? I'd like that.

For cleaning out the teapot spout? What a fascinating idea. One so often gets the odd earwig or hairpin straying in, I find. One brisk jab with this little poppet will soon jerk intruders right back in the pot, won't it?

Glad to have seen you. Good day.
D. J. SAINT

Birds and Bees

HELLO, darling. It's me. Can you talk or is that ghastly Parker man breathing down your neck and drawing striped pussies all over your blotting paper? Yes, I thought so. I can hear his heavy breathing. The point is, duckie, I've been to see old Farthingdale and he says I am! The storks are flapping their wings and you and I will be able to go a-pram pushing among the darling buds of next May. I knew you knew but I thought you would like to know officially. Darling, it's no good you being so thoroughly deflating. It's not too soon for you to realize that from now on the little woman comes first and for some time afterwards, judging from all the cases of Post-Natal Blues I have read about. No, it's a very real state of mind, nothing to do with Lena Horne. What I wanted to say was not to mention a word of it to the Bellingshams to-night. Yes, they and the Harpers are coming to dinner. I know Belle Bellingham. She has been giving me arch looks for the last two years and has promised to lend me piles of her frowsting maternity clothes—"should the need ever arise." Are you still there, angel? Well, I obviously can't borrow any of her muted smocks and sagging skirts. I'm suspicious about these things—the baby would probably have his chin and her wart. Of course I haven't been drinking, I'm just rather excited. It's quite a thing to bring a new little life into the world. Now sweet darling, you really are being a teeny bit irritating. Probably first rumblings of the "watch-hubby-doesn't-get-his-nose-pushed-out" problem. I do hope Parker is enjoying this conversation, but tell him I must go now before you get any crosser. Lots of love and kisses then, sweetheart, I'm off to get a melon for to-night if they're cheap, and then on to Externally Yours for a really stupendous "lady-in-waiting" ensemble.

EILEEN MEYER

A Pocketful of Frock

THOSE crafty old Chinese characters, famous for their boxes within boxes, will have to take a back seat now. The clever boys and girls of the fashion world have gone one better. They have just designed a frock in fine knit silk that will roll up and go in the pocket. And very nice too. But what, we all want to know, goes in the pocket of the frock in the pocket?

The possibilities of a spare dress, concealed on the person, can readily be seen. Guaranteed not to wrinkle, sag, crack or ladder, it pops out of its container as fresh as a daisy, ready for any gay lark in the social whirl.

Should the dress in current use be too svelte to allow of even the slightest bulge, pocket-wise, there is always the crown of the new high hats. For an unexpected dinner date the hat can be smartly removed and the dress unfurled. In a trice there emerges the new, more glamorous you, like a beautiful butterfly released from its chrysalis. Whether you want to go through the whole process in reverse for the journey home by Underground, or just sit there, clutching the discarded dress in hot little hands, is a matter of purely personal preference.

Sportswomen in particular stand to benefit from the frock in the pocket vogue. Motor-scooter girls, for example, instead of chugging up to the ballroom all togged-up for the evening, can now travel comfortably in oil-skins. The flattening effect of a crash helmet on a bouffant hair style might still present something of a problem. But here again the dainty little dress container can be pressed into service. Placed under the curls, it would help to keep the whole edifice crisply erect, come what may in the shape of thrills or spills.

FRAN STARR

School Report

"TOO easily satisfied. Spelling still poor."

Her grammar's erratic. Lacks care.
Would succeed if she worked. Inclined
to be snug."

I think that's a wee bit unfair.

Ah well, their it is! Disappointing
perhaps,

For a mum what has always had brane,
But we can't all have looks or be good
at our books . . .

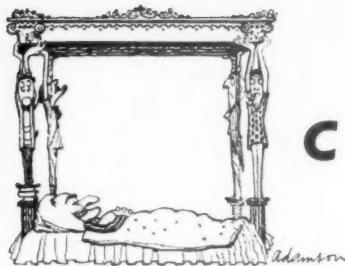
She's her father all over agane.

CAROLE PAIN



"There's a much bigger bunch over in the corner, Mr. Hartington."

criticism



BOOKING OFFICE

Johnsonian Gleanings

Diaries, Prayers, and Annals of Samuel Johnson. Edited by E. L. McAdam, Jr., with Donald and Mary Hyde. *Yale University Press. London: O.U.P., 80/-*

ONE might hardly expect fresh material to appear at this stage about Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) whose life has already been so fully documented, but this collection, the first volume of the Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, contains with other new autobiographical matter a diary written by Johnson between 1765 and 1784 and part of the famous treasure trove found in the croquet box by Colonel Isham at Malahide Castle in 1937.

Johnson has been discussed so endlessly that it is not easy to say something new about him. I suppose there are few figures in history of whom one has a clearer picture—although, of course, that picture may not be altogether in true focus. The sound common sense, the moral approach, the crushing manner, the staunch toryism, the melancholy, the eccentricity, the near madness . . . that is roughly the group of characteristics that come to mind when Johnson's name is mentioned.

Here are the resolves noted for September 18, 1760:

- To combat notions of obligation.
- To apply to Study.
- To reclaim imagination.
- To consult the resolves on Tetty's [his dead wife's] coffin.
- To rise early.
- To study Religion.
- To go to Church.
- To drink less strong liquours.
- To keep Journal.
- To oppose laziness, by doing what is to be done.

The instructive notes to this well-edited edition suggest that "to reclaim imagination" means to rid himself of sexual fantasy, to which some of Johnson's letters to his friend Mrs. Thrale indicate he was at times subject. His resolution to drink "less strong

liquours" was a new one. About the year 1759 he had drunk three bottles of port at University College, Oxford, without being the worse for it; but it is on record that he carried off this feat less successfully in 1762. It is hardly necessary to add that the bottles of that period were not of the present-day size; nor was port then so strongly fortified with brandy.

The journal of his tour to North Wales is included here, a diary written so carefully that it seems possible Johnson may have considered the possibility of later using what he wrote for a book on the lines of his *Journey to the Western Islands*. The object of the trip was to take possession of an estate in Flintshire inherited from an uncle by Mrs. Thrale.

Poor Mrs. Thrale lost her purse on their travels, and apparently made rather a fuss about it, as Johnson notes: "She

NOVEL FACES XLVIII



P. H. NEWBY

*How great the range where Newby's voice
is heard,
From far Sakkara journeying to the Third.*

expressed so much uneasiness that I concluded the sum to be very great, but when I heard of only seven guineas, I was glad to find she had so much sensibility of money." As the purchasing power of seven guineas must have been something in the neighbourhood of a hundred pounds in present-day money at the very least, it does not seem surprising that Mrs. Thrale was annoyed. The Welsh gentry whose hospitality they enjoyed were found to be "not inelegant," but there was a good deal of tribulation to be endured in the Welsh inns.

In addition to these travels and moral reflections, there are also to be found in this book copious notes in Latin on the subject of Johnson's daily state of health, together with records of the alarming nostrums in use at that time. He was often a very sick man.

As Johnson's readers go—and in spite of due admiration for one of England's undoubtedly greatest figures—I cannot claim to be a great Johnsonian; I am in agreement with most of what he said; I can see that he said it very well. He is a dominating figure as moralist, biographer, and poet. All the same, he is not, above all, the great man I should like to have met. However, all that large and devoted band, the true Johnsonians, will find an enormous amount to enjoy in this collection, which gives promise of a fine series of volumes to come.

ANTHONY POWELL

In the Shadows

Solitaire. Kay Dick. Heinemann, 13/6

With Paris as the setting and the writing of a novel as the theme, Miss Dick describes the relationships of two career women and the first husband and son of one of them. Events are unimportant, though the meetings and partings are varied by a shot in the foot. What matter are the shadows caught for the killing-bottle, the expressions the narrator glimpses without understanding them quite as well as the reader. The real nature of her affections is indicated only by a single reference to her

eyeglass and even her accounts of discussions of the novel with friends have to be reinterpreted in the light of her inadvertent self-betrayal.

The more subtle you are the less tenuous you can afford to be and Miss Dick has not completely avoided the danger of basing a full-length book on material that, treated without convolution, would make only a short sketch. Some of her subject-matter remains private to women and the male reader may occasionally feel that he is failing to catch all the hints.

R. G. G. P.

Flowers for Mrs. Harris. Paul Gallico. *Michael Joseph, 7/6*

Mr. Gallico's heroine, a perky little London charwoman, dreams of a Dior dress, and having saved her pennies for years, goes to buy it in Paris, where she has astonishing and heart-warming adventures and turns out an angel in disguise. The plot is neatly hinged, on the edge of fantasy; the lightness of the writing keeps it safe from sentimentality.

Mr. Gallico strikes happy sparks from this marriage between Battersea and the Avenue Montaigne. His Paris rings so true that one wonders why, in planning a gargantuan dinner for Mrs. Harris, he should have invented the wines, Chassigny Montrachet and Beaune Romanée.

E. O. D. K.

The Twilight of Monarchy. L. G. Pine. *Burke, 18/-*

The title does less than justice to this lively historical parade of Kings and Queens, Emirs, Shahs, Sultans, Beys and Caliphs, Grand Turks and Grand Duchesses, Lamas who must be discovered by signs and portents, Popes to be elected by a conclave of cardinals, Mikados to be preserved like saints in a shrine, and even a well-known Khan who five times won the Derby.

These chapters bring little hope of sober stability in the regions of the Near and Middle East where thrones are thickest on the ground supported by floods of oil and threatened by waves of Communism and where indeed the wearing of a crown has never been free from at least a certain degree of malaise. Two monarchies, in Tunisia and Iraq, came to an end even while this book was being written, but happily the writer still has sound unshaken faith in our own British constitution. As always with Mr. Pine his accuracy is as unchallengeable as his loyalty.

C. C. P.

AT THE BALLET

La Fête Etrange—Mam'zelle Angot
(COVENT GARDEN)

ANDRÉE HOWARD'S romantic ballet *La Fête Etrange* might well have been devised to accentuate the poetic quality of Svetlana Beriosova's delicate art. She was, however, unheard of when in blacked-out London the

fragrant little episode, as it then seemed, was first done on the tiny stage of the Arts Theatre Club, with Maude Lloyd in the leading part. It has been performed since and always with an appeal to the lover of gentle, lyrical beauty. But not until its arrival on the spacious stage of the Royal Opera House did it receive its due as an important work of art.

What had hitherto been enjoyed as a charming anecdote of a bride-to-be's brief encounter with a rustic lad has expanded from an exquisite trifle into a poignantly muted drama, existing independently of Alain-Fournier's novel, *Le Grand Meaulnes*, from which Ronald Crichton lifted it for his scenario.

That the ballet is now seen to greater advantage is only partly due to its having the grave beauty and dream-like grace of Beriosova's characterization as the Bride, the part in which she appeared with the former Sadler's Wells junior company. Its new stature owes much to Pirmin Treu's sensitive realization of the Country Boy who strays inadvertently into a *fête champêtre* celebrating approaching nuptials. His instant infatuation with the Bride and the tension which it innocently creates between her and her aristocratic lover precipitate a situation in which the dancer must express a subtle conflict of emotion. Mr. Treu's gift of pathos enables him to convey a whole world of bewilderment in the Boy's momentary stumbling into a world undreamed-of. Ronald Hynd is not, perhaps, ideally cast as the noble Bridegroom who awaits his Bride's return to her senses in immobility; but he carried it off with proper dignity.

The small *corps de ballet*, representing wedding guests, responds well to the mood of melancholy and compassion evoked by love's sad enigmas.

On the larger stage Miss Howard's choreography flows with smooth elegance and cleverly eschews the least appearance of bravura. Gabriel Fauré's piano music, orchestrated by Guy Warrack, and two of his songs sung in the orchestra pit by Elisabeth Robinson, match the sentiment of the episode. But it is the creative spirit of the late Sophie Fedorovitch which, as never before, broods over and pervades the whole shimmering fantasy. The perfect simplicity of her setting on



the château terrace and the soft colour and texture of her dream-like dresses have the inimitable stamp of her artistry.

The name-part in Massine's *Mam'zelle Angot* is one of the few leading roles in the ballet repertory which gives scope for such a born soubrette as Maryon Lane. Her gamin-like approach to the character sparkled with impish touches; with Alexander Grant, as the love-lorn barber, she fills it with gay mischief. Gary Burne, as the Caricaturist who momentarily dazzles her, brings out excellencies which should make him a distinguished *danseur noble*. Brenda Taylor, likewise, seems on the way up in the balletic hierarchy. Her dancing as the Aristocrat is polished and confident. Ray Powell, as Chief of Police, demonstrates how much intelligent and unobtrusive acting in a small part can contribute to the projection of comic character.

C. B. MORTLOCK

AT THE PLAY

Two for the Seesaw (HAYMARKET)
West Side Story (HER MAJESTY'S)
Who's Your Father (CAMBRIDGE)

THE odds against full-length plays with only two characters are heavy, but in *Two for the Seesaw* William Gibson overcomes them in such measure that our reservations are not telling. In his second act the graph of excitement sags enough for us to wonder if perhaps he is straining the resources of what should have been a long one-acter—a feeling dissipated by the sureness of his final scenes. There are times, too, especially in the second act, when we also wonder if a conventional film drama

A CRISIS OVER

THERE have been bad shocks in British homes this week. Was it in yours that a gaily-wrapped tea-trolley turned up, from the old friend whose address you couldn't find? This is an emergency. Show your mettle. Deal with it in a flash by sending the late well-wisher PUNCH for a year. Or, rather, send us his address, now you've got it—and we will. Together with a Greetings Card. Subscriptions: Great Britain and Eire £2 16s.; Canada (By Canadian Magazine Post) £2 10s. (87.25); Elsewhere Overseas £3 (U.S.A. \$9.00). Write to: Department ED., PUNCH, 10 Bouvier Street, London, E.C.4. U.S.A. and Canadian readers may remit by cheques on their own banks. Other overseas readers should consult their bankers or remit by postal money order.

is not being fobbed off on us, by a skilful team, as something more profound than it really is. This feeling never quite passes; but although in the main this is a superficial play, its moments of truth are moving, and its sentiment, though sentimental, is always controlled.

The third character is the telephone connecting the bed-sitting-rooms of the two lovers, and it is so integral a part of the evening that we are made to accept it as an essential factor in the birth and death of their brief affair. The first act, beautifully designed, with charm and wit, brings them together, two lonely strangers. The man is a young barrister who loves his wife but has left her in rebellion against his dependence on her influential family; the girl a dancer handicapped by ill-health—honest, naive, warm-hearted and, for all the freedom of her life, innocent. This may sound an intolerably novelettish mixture, but so well is she played by Gerry Jedd that she becomes completely real to us.

Their affair takes on a new dimension when the girl has a hemorrhage and the man moves in to nurse her. Still tortured by his broken marriage, he hurries on his divorce. For the first time in her life she has given herself wholly; he has done so already, and he cannot do it again. In a good passage he tells her why marriage is impossible, and they part, once more on the telephone. No

hysteria here, but generous dignity, and the girl's heartbreak comes over.

The play is mostly written in the emotional shorthand of America, but this is managed far more adroitly than usual; Mr. Gibson has wit and feeling. Miss Jedd's performance is something to remember gratefully. She has a lovely gamine face and a curious clockwork walk. The natural intensity of her acting and its fine and delicate shades make it stranger that she is not yet well known in New York. To say that she has a greater variety than Peter Finch is not to diminish his achievement in sustaining his end of the seesaw with an accuracy that persuades us that the end had to happen as it did. From Arthur Penn an impeccable production, and from George Jenkins a revolving multiple set that keeps its interest, backed by the crushing skyline of New York.

West Side Story is a phenomenon, an epic of uncivilization, and thus the exact opposite of *My Fair Lady*, which I greatly prefer. It ferments the half-baked passions of moronic adolescents, and yet is in some respects the most remarkable musical the Americans have sent us. In its clash between rival gangs of young whites and Puerto Ricans in the streets of New York it follows, surprisingly closely and with surprising success, the story of *Romeo and Juliet*. The gangs

are the Montagues and Capulets, and their fighting is more inevitable than it is in Shakespeare. For in it one can read *Notting Hill* and all the other ugly spasms of racial jealousy.

In a way the animal vigour and sub-human herd malevolence of these American teddy-boys is nauseating; yet I was fascinated and by the end utterly exhausted by the extraordinary vitality of the whole production. In places it approaches opera, but although its sentimental songs are tolerable and there is one very funny one in which the whites rouse their sluggish minds to explain why they are what they are, the words

REP SELECTION

Bromley Rep, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, for an unspecified season.
Queen's, Hornchurch, *Dick Whittington*, Boxing Day to January 17th.

Ipswich Theatre, *Babes in the Wood*, to January 17th.
Dundee Rep, *Ali Baba*, to January 10th.

are less important than the action. Ballet and mime are the core of this musical, and the dancing is wonderfully good.

Praise to Leonard Bernstein's music, which moves confidently from the wildest jive to the more sober thunders of opera; to Oliver Smith's extremely dramatic scenery and Irene Sharaff's bold dresses; to George Chakiris and Ken Le Roy, the rival leaders, Don McKay and Chita Rivera, the lovers, and Marlys Watters, a marvellously Latin equivalent of Juliet's Nurse; indeed to the entire cast, which seems charged with emotional electricity. But above all these, *West Side Story* is a personal triumph for Jerome Robbins, who conceived its idea, staged it, and planned and directed its breathless and immensely exciting choreography.

In *Who's Your Father?* Dennis Cannan hasn't made up his mind whether he was writing comedy or farce, and Peter Wood in his production seems equally undecided. The plot is wild (orphan millionaire anxious to know origins engages dapper genealogist, his daughter persuades genealogist to swap identities with her corduroy boy-friend, pompous intruder believed by millionaire to be arch-white-slaver turns out not only his father but a bishop, and so on), but is slowed up by thin patches of comedy in which Joan Haythorne is out on an impossibly sticky limb and Maurice Denham struggling solidly uphill. As the tousled bohemian Donald Sinden brings a tonic breeze of lunacy—he is much the best thing in the evening—and Newton Blick and Peter Myers are also helpfully on the side of farce, though I question if Aylesbury will warm to Mr. Blick in its palace. We laughed, but not enough.



Tony—DON MCKAY

Maria—MARLYS WATTERS

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Five Finger Exercise (Comedy—23/7/58), good straight play by new author. *The Grass is Greener* (St. Martin's—10/12/58), another distinguished comedy from Hugh and Margaret Williams. *Irma la Douce* (Lyric—23/7/58), Peter Brook's production of French underworld musical.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

Summer with Monika
Home Before Dark

THE breath of reality—how rare it is in films, and how instantly recognizable! Not till you notice it do you suddenly realize that an enormous amount of most films—indeed all of most films, and nearly all of most of the others—is in a different, artificial, contrived convention, which you accept simply through familiarity and because it is not ill-suited to the artificially contrived stories they have to tell. Then comes such a piece as *Summer with Monika* (Director: Ingmar Bergman), which—like the same director's *Wild Strawberries*—is so fresh and convincing and full of humanity that it makes the average ordinary entertaining film, good or less good, seem like a game with bits of spotlit cardboard.

Here again, as in *Wild Strawberries*, the basic story is exceedingly simple—and the film itself is simpler, because it tells a straightforward tale without dreams or obvious symbolism and with only one or two very brief flashbacks. Two youngsters, the girl (seventeen) from a poorer home than the boy (nineteen), meet and love and go off for the summer together, living on a motor-boat and having a blissful time among the islands of Stockholm. They marry when the girl is expecting a baby, and go back to the town, and the boy works hard for his little family, but the girl—who has always been the dominant partner and in fact seduced him to begin with—seeks fun on her own, and betrays him, and they part. He is left with the baby, sadly recalling the happiness they had and wondering why it had to go wrong.

No more than that; but it is done superbly. From his two young leading players, Harriet Andersson and Lars Ekberg, the director has coaxed miraculous performances, and the detail, the atmosphere, the incidental characters (the boy's dim father, his gruff aunt, the noisy family in the one-room home from which the girl escapes, the old men glimpsed for a few moments in the café where the pair first meet, the irritable men at the shop where the boy is working when the film opens, literally dozens more)—all these are brilliant.

Visually too (photography, as in *Wild Strawberries*: Gunnar Fischer) the whole thing is attractive—and above all, there



Charlotte Bronn—JEAN SIMMONS

(*Home Before Dark*)

is that "breath of reality." For example, compare the "idyll" here (when the youngsters are having their summer of love) with the one in *Virgin Island*; beside these living, breathing young people the decorative pair in *Virgin Island* might be illustrations in a glossy magazine. There is no room to mention half the merits of this extremely enjoyable film. It ought to be much nearer central London than the Paris-Pullman.

Now back to artificiality. There are two things very obvious to an experienced filmgoer about *Home Before Dark* (Director: Mervyn LeRoy): it is—and in spades—what is known as a "woman's picture," and it has a sort of 1938-ish quality visually.

By this last phrase I mean that the photography gives nearly everything a look, familiar twenty years ago, which I more than once in those days described as a silvery, smooth, hotel-bedroom gleam. The qualities of a "woman's picture" take longer to define. One is of course that a woman is the central character. Another is that certain kinds of emotional situation recur and are, shall we say, hoked up. I'm thinking particularly of the situation in which the central figure somehow makes herself extremely conspicuous, so that the simpler feminine minds in the audience, who are of course identifying themselves with her, know to the very depths of their being how ecstatic, or sad, or just simply terrible she feels. For men, some of these moments can be very uncomfortable indeed—and so in a way they are, I'm sure, for women, but most of them seem to find the *frisson* somehow pleasurable.

The story is rather a novelettish

affair about a woman who returns, after a year at a mental hospital, to live in the household whose tensions caused her breakdown. There are a noisy bossy stepmother and a pretty stepsister of whom she is jealous; her stuffed-shirt husband no longer finds her attractive; and staying in the house is a tweedy pipe-smoking type with crinkly eyes who really understands. You can see the end a long way off... Jean Simmons plays her emotional scenes quite impressively well, but it remains contrived emotion.

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Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

No Room for Wild Animals uses its magnificent colour pictures of the animals of Africa (from kingfisher to elephant, from goose to hippopotamus) to rub in its passionate message—that the slaughter of them should be stopped before they are exterminated. *The House of Lovers* (directed by Duvivier, from Zola's novel *Pot-Bouille*) is hard-workingly cynical and disillusioned about love and marriage, and often funny in its very artificial way. *Bell, Book and Candle* (17/12/58) is very amusing and enjoyable. The second feature at the Rialto, which doesn't even mention it in some of its newspaper advertisements, is an excellent little pursuit story of London, *Nowhere to Go* (17/12/58). The outstandingly good London programme is the Academy's: *Wild Strawberries* (5/11/58) and Basil Wright's colour documentary about Greece, *The Immortal Land*.

Releases include two big ones that I was very much less keen on than most people were: *Me and the Colonel* (12/11/58) and *The Sheriff of Fractured Jaw* (19/11/58).

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR

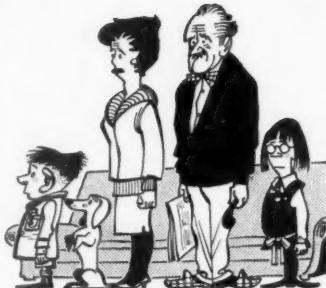
The Field-Marshall

MONTY is certainly spreading himself. His spiky personality seems to have been barking at us with a sort of dogged jauntiness from newspapers and magazines for months now, and the attendant toing and froing of military or political debate has raged and grumbled like a moving barrage in the night. Now he is with us on television ("Command In Battle," BBC) whisking us through the blood and glory of his campaigns, crisp and perky and hypnotic—without the emotional persuasiveness of Horrocks, that most accomplished interpreter of battles and predicaments; but with a steely, dry, no-nonsense approach which almost bullies one into believing that one has fully grasped the devilish cunning of this tactical manœuvre or that. As a matter of fact I found the battle of Alamein, for all the Field-Marshal's maps and arrows and meticulous briefing, to be as baffling as ever. I got most of the points of his master plan, but once the shooting started and the screen filled with smoke and tanks and nameless heroes plodding through the dust and the darkness and the din, I completely lost my bearings and gave up, aware only of the grinding hell of war (the filmed sequences are magnificent and heartbreaking) and the sharp yet nasal voice of the commander—who knew, thank God, precisely what was happening, and who brought out of the tangled mess a marvellous victory.

Others may more easily absorb the battle details, and rub their hands with satisfaction as Monty makes each military point; but for me the interest of the series lies in the man himself—in the opportunity to see and hear this legendary character reliving his days of courage and decision. There is, to me, a loneliness



FIELD-MARSHAL MONTGOMERY



[Command in Battle

about him—something of that intangible otherness which so often cuts off the regular soldier from his fellows. Surely now, it seems, his memories must all be flavoured with the sights and sounds and smells of war, the rumble and glitter of messes, the rattle of rain on canvas, the small print of regulations, forms in triplicate, polished brass, swaying jeeps, the endless scheming over maps, faceless battalions marching. Then there emerges the feeling of his shining confidence that God—"the God of battles"—is on his side. And the occasional straining after humour—funny bits to lighten the lecture, which creak like a schoolmaster's attempts at teenage talk. I was curiously moved by his shyly delighted account of how he acted as his own P.R.O. in the desert by wearing extraordinary hats so that he would become a mascot to his men and boost morale. But above everything else he leaps from the screen as a man of streamlined decision—an officer-type born and bred, but with that inexplicable, straightforward genius for sizing up a vastly complicated situation, evolving a plan of action on the instant, sweeping aside objections, going back to bed, waking just in time to receive the

news of victory, nodding curtly, and making his report.

He shows a remote, cold, simple dignity, and he is a great man—the kind of great man that these islands have always managed to produce in their hours of greatest need. Television is as familiar as piped water these days, but we should not too easily take for granted the wonder of having seen such a man talk to us of his part in making our history.

For talk of other battles long ago we could do worse than watch the BBC's Hall of Fame series. I have been bored by the avuncular reminiscing of Raymond Glendenning on more than one occasion in this programme, but he usually has some novel or exciting film to show. The notion of bringing out newsreels of half-forgotten sporting events, instead of letting them gather dust in some dim cellar, was an excellent one. There seems to be a preponderance of boxing, but this of all sports seems to me to lend itself to television. I object to the adding of audience-noise sound-tracks to bouts of long before the talkies, but I find the titanic rough-houses of the old-time champions make very acceptable entertainment.

HENRY TURTON



DOUGLAS.

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